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THE

WORKS

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IN ELEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. VI.

HINTS TOWARDS FORMING THE CHARACTER OF A PRINCESS.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, STRAND.
1830.

20486.8
1860, July 13.
Pickman Bequest.

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LONDON:
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HINTS

TOWARDS FORMING THE CHARACTER

OF

A YOUNG PRINCESS.

I call that a complete and generous Education, which fits a person to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, all the offices both of public and private life; of peace and of war.

MILTON.

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

THE LORD BISHOP OF EXETER.

My Lord,

Could it have been foreseen by the Author of the following pages, that, in the case of the illustrious person who is the subject of them, the standard of Education would have been set so high; and especially, that this Education would be committed to such able and distinguished hands, the work might surely have been spared. But as the Second Volume was gone to the press before that appointment was announced, which must give general satisfaction, it becomes important to request, that if the advice suggested in any part of the Work should appear presumptuous, your Lordship, and still more the Public, who might be more forward than your Lordship in charging the Author with presumption, will have the candour to recollect, that it was offered, not to the learned Bishop of Exeter, but to an unknown and even to an imaginary Preceptor.

Under these circumstances, your Lordship will, perhaps, have the goodness to accept the Dedication of these slight Volumes, not as arrogantly pointing out duties to the discharge of which you are so competent, but as a mark of the respect and esteem with which I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient
and most faithful Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

April 2. 1805.

PREFACE

TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

If any book, written with an upright and disinterested intention, may be thought to require an apology, it is surely the slight work which is now, with the most respectful deference, submitted, not to the public only, but especially to those who may be more immediately interested in the important object which it has in view.

If we were to enquire what is, even at the present critical period, one of the most momentous concerns which can engage the attention of an Englishman, who feels for his country like a patriot, and for his posterity like a father; what is that object of which the importance is not bounded by the shores of the British islands, nor limited by our colonial possessions, — with which, in its consequences, the interests not only of all Europe, but of the whole civilised world, may hereafter be in some measure implicated; — what Briton would hesitate to reply, The Education of the Princess Charlotte of Wales?

After this frank confession of the unspeakable importance of the subject in view, it is no wonder if the extreme difficulty, as well as delicacy, of the present undertaking, is acknowledged to be sensibly felt by the Author.

It will too probably be thought to imply not only officiousness, but presumption, that a private individual should thus hazard the obtrusion of unsolicited observations on the proper mode of forming the character of an English Princess. — It may seem to involve an appearance of unwarrantable distrust, by implying an apprehension of some deficiency in the plan about to be adopted by those, whoever they may be, on whom this great trust may be devolved; and to indicate self-conceit, by conveying an intimation, after so strong an avowal of the delicacy and difficulty of the task, that such a deficiency is within the powers of the Author to supply.

That Author, however, earnestly desires, as far as it may be possible, to obviate these anticipated charges, by alleging that under this free constitution, in which every topic of national policy is openly canvassed, and in which the prerogatives of the Crown form no mean part of the liberty of the subject, the principles which it is proper to instil into a royal personage become a topic, which, if discussed respectfully, may, without offence, exercise the liberty of the British Press.

The writer is very far, indeed, from pretending to offer any thing approaching to a system of instruction for the Royal Pupil, much less from

presuming to dictate a plan of conduct to the preceptor. What is here presented is a mere outline, which may be filled up by far more able hands; a sketch which contains no consecutive details, which neither aspires to regularity of design nor exactness of execution.

To awaken a lively attention to a subject of such moment; to point out some circumstances connected with the early season of improvement, but still more with the subsequent stages of life; to offer, not a treatise on education, but a desultory suggestion of sentiments and principles; to convey instruction, not so much by precept or by argument, as to exemplify it by illustrations and examples; and, above all, to stimulate the wise and the good to exertions far more effectual; — these are the real motives which have given birth to this slender performance.

Had the Royal Pupil been a Prince, these Hints would never have been obtruded on the world, as it would then have been naturally assumed, that the established plan usually adopted in such cases would have been pursued. Nor does the Author presume, in the present instance, to insinuate a suspicion, that there will be any want of a large and liberal scope in the projected system, or to intimate an apprehension that the course of study will be be adapted to the sex, rather than to the circumstances of the Princess.

If, however, it should be asked, why a stranger presumes to interfere in a matter of such high concern? it may be answered, in the words of an

elegant critic, that in classic story, when a superb and lasting monument was about to be consecrated to beauty, every lover was permitted to carry a tribute.

The appearance of a valuable elementary work on the principles of Christianity, which has been recently published in our language, translated from the German, under the immediate patronage of an august Personage, for the avowed purpose of benefit to her illustrious daughters, as it is an event highly auspicious to the general interests of religion, so is it a circumstance very encouraging to the present undertaking.

It is impossible to write on such points as are discussed in this little work, without being led to draw a comparison between the lot of a British subject, and that of one who treats on similar topics under a despotic government. — The excellent Archbishop of Cambray, with every advantage which genius, learning, profession, and situation, could confer; the admired preceptor of the Duke of Burgundy, appointed to the office by the King himself; was yet, in the beautiful work which he composed for the use of his royal pupil, driven to the necessity of couching his instructions under a fictitious narrative, and of sheltering, behind the veil of fable, the duties of a just sovereign, and the blessings of a good government: he was aware that, even under this disguise, his delineation of both would too probably be construed into a satire on the personal errors of his own king, and the vices of the French government; and, in spite of

his ingenious discretion, the event justified his apprehensions.

Fortunate are the subjects of that free and happy country who are not driven to have recourse to any such expedients; who may, without danger, dare to express temperately what they think lawfully; who, in describing the most perfect form of government, instead of recurring to poetic invention, need only delineate that under which they themselves live; who, in sketching the character, and shadowing out the duties of a patriot king, have no occasion to turn their eyes from their own country to the thrones of Ithaca or Salentum.

PREFACE

TO

THE FIFTH EDITION.

Being called upon for a new edition of this little work, it is impossible to avoid adverting to that overwhelming event which deprived our country of the illustrious person for whose more especial use it was originally written. Her early death produced a sensation which will not soon be forgotten. It was a sorrow not the less felt by every one because it was shared by all: it was as much an individual as an universal sorrow. Every Briton appeared to feel as acutely as if he alone felt it. It seemed, as in the case of Egypt, that "there was not an house where there was not one dead."

But if it was deeply affecting to see a whole nation in tears, it was, in a higher sense, deeply instructive to see a whole nation on their knees. The trial seemed to produce that effect which the Divine Inflictor always intends our trials should produce; it produced a spirit of prayer and supplication, an avowal of the national sins, which

had probably brought on us this national visitation.

But if the visitation was sent to *us* for correction, it was doubtless sent to *her* whom we lament, in mercy. She has, we trust, obtained the prize without running the race. She has escaped the cares and perils inseparable from an earthly crown; and she has, we humbly hope, through Him who loved her and gave Himself for her, obtained an imperishable crown whose glories fade not away. She had lived long enough to taste as much happiness as this world, in its best forms and its highest condition, has to bestow. Youth, beauty, talent, royalty, all conspired to make her singularly distinguished; but this combination, which made her life great, availed not to make it lasting. She lived to have tasted the overflowing cup of the most perfect human felicity, without any infusion of bitterness; she lived long enough to show that the highest elevation of rank and happiness did not intoxicate her youthful and ardent mind; — so far from it, her principles were more fully drawn out, and her character more beautifully developed, by those very circumstances which have betrayed so many into forgetfulness of their awful responsibility.

She had, for a time, the trial of the highest human prosperity, and she stood it. When all the world was at her command, domestic life was her choice; when dissipation courted her, she resisted it. She was superior to all the pleasures, falsely so called, which invited her. She found

her pleasure where she found her duty, — in the practice of the domestic virtues, — in the enjoyment of domestic happiness, — in the reciprocation of conjugal tenderness. These pure delights more than made up to her all that she had voluntarily sacrificed to them.

The warmth, affection, and frankness of her disposition were admirable; and it is not wonderful that these indications of a character purely English should so powerfully attract the affections of the country to its Princess.

Her naturally fine understanding, and the care which had been taken in its cultivation by the Right Reverend Prelate who superintended her education *, gave every expectation that her public worth would not have been inferior to her private virtues.

Her conduct illustrated this important truth, that the most fair and simple methods for acquiring true popularity are the most successful means for obtaining it; — it was gained without being sought.

Her life furnished an illustrious example to youth, rank, and dignity, of the right use to be made of such advantages; her death, of the short time that may be granted for their possession.

Regular in the discharge of her religious duties, exemplary in her charities, personally kind and condescending to all about her, she showed how many excellencies may be comprised within a

* Now Lord Bishop of Salisbury.

short space, while they served to augment the regret that it was not longer.

The tributary offerings of pious respect with which the memory of the royal deceased was embalmed in almost every pulpit in the kingdom (some of them compositions of high excellence), leave nothing to be said that has not been said before, and said better. All the topics of religious sorrow and religious consolation for the mourning survivors were therein exhausted. *

* The Author is flattered in being able to say that the lamented Princess read this work with her Preceptor, a few months before her marriage, when she expressed herself much gratified with it, particularly with the observations on history. The Author has his Lordship's authority for stating this fact.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE FIFTH EDITION.

THE publication of a Fifth Edition is a gratifying evidence that the perusal of these volumes has not been limited to the lamented Princess, for whose use it was originally composed. Yet it is probable, that this has been less generally read than the other works of the writer, from the circumstance of its having been considered by many as exclusively appropriated to Royalty. This is far from being the case; a very large portion of the work, it is presumed, will be found to come within the scope of useful information to all young persons in the higher ranks of life. The author has been lately solicited to write something of a general arrangement of useful reading, and to point out, and remark upon, such books as are most proper for the study of young persons who have nearly completed their education. On looking over the "Hints to a young Princess," she finds that they contain the substance of what she has been required to write, and that if she had made a fresh

attempt, she should nearly have repeated what is here said. She is the more encouraged to make this observation, as she has received assurances from parents of high rank and fortune, that they found these volumes of much use in the instruction of their own families.

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HINTS

FOR

A YOUNG PRINCESS.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

We are told that when a sovereign of ancient times, who wished to be a mathematician, but was deterred by the difficulty of attainment, asked, whether he could not be instructed in some easier method; the answer which he received was, that there was no royal road to geometry. — The lesson contained in this reply ought never to be lost sight of, in that most important and delicate of all undertakings, the education of a prince.

It is a truth which might appear too obvious to require enforcing, and yet of all others it is a truth most liable to be practically forgotten, that the same subjugation of desire and will, of inclinations and tastes, to the laws of reason and conscience, which every one wishes to see promoted in the lowest ranks of society, is still more necessary in the very highest, in order to the attainment either

of individual happiness, or of general virtue; to public usefulness, or to private self-enjoyment.

Where a prince, therefore, is to be educated, his own welfare no less than that of his people, humanity no less than policy, prescribe, that the claims and privileges of the rational being should not be suffered to merge in the peculiar rights or exemptions of the expectant sovereign. If, in such cases, the wants and weaknesses of human nature could indeed be wholly effaced, as easily as they are kept out of sight, there would at least be some reasonable plea against the charge of cruelty. But when, on the contrary, the most elevated monarch must still retain every natural hope and fear, every affection and passion of the heart, every frailty of the mind, and every weakness of the body, to which the meanest subject is liable; how exquisitely inhuman must it be to provide so sedulously for the extrinsic accident of transient greatness, as to blight the growth of substantial virtue, to dry up the fountains of mental and moral comfort, and, in short, to commit the ill-fated victim of such mismangement to more, almost, than human dangers and difficulties, without even the common resources of the least favoured of mankind.

Yet, must not this be the unaggravated consequence of not accustoming the royal child to that salutary control which the corruption of our nature requires, as its indispensable and earliest corrective? If those foolish desires, which in the great mass of mankind are providentally repressed by the want of means to gratify them, should, in the

case of royalty, be thought warrantable, because every possible gratification is within reach, what would be the result, but the full-blown luxuriance of folly, vice, and misery? The laws of human nature will not bend to human greatness; and by these immutable laws it is determined, that happiness and virtue, virtue and self-command, self-command and early habitual self-denial should be joined together in an indissoluble bond of connection.

The first habit, therefore, to be formed in every human being, and still more in the offspring and heir of royalty, is that of patience, and even cheerfulness, under postponed and restricted gratification. And the first lesson to be taught is, that since self-command is so essential to all genuine virtue and real happiness, where others cannot restrain us, there, especially, we should restrain ourselves. That illustrious monarch, Gustavus Adolphus, was so deeply sensible of this truth, that when he was surprised by one of his officers in secret prayer in his tent, he said, "Persons of my rank are answerable to God alone for their actions: this gives the enemy of mankind a peculiar advantage over us; an advantage which can only be resisted by prayer and reading the Scriptures."

As the mind opens, the universal truth of this principle may be exemplified in innumerable instances, by which it may be demonstrated, that man is a rational being only so far as he can thus command himself. That such a superiority to the passions is essential to all regular and steady per-

formance of duty; and that true gratification is thus, and thus only insured, because, by him who thus habitually restrains himself, not only every lawful pleasure is most perfectly enjoyed, but every common blessing, for which the sated voluptuary has lost all relish, becomes a source of the most genuine pleasure, a source of pleasure which is never exhausted, because such common blessings are never wholly withheld.

The mind should be formed early, no less than the person; and for the same reason. Providence has plainly indicated childhood to be the season of instruction, by communicating, at that period, such flexibility to the organs, such retention to the memory, such quickness to the apprehension, such inquisitiveness to the temper, such alacrity to the animal spirits, and such impressibility to the affections, as are not possessed at any subsequent period. We are therefore bound by every tie of duty to follow these obvious designations of Providence, by moulding that flexibility to the most durable ends; by storing that memory with the richest knowledge; by pointing that apprehension to the highest objects; by giving to that alacrity its best direction; by turning that inquisitiveness to the noblest intellectual purposes; and, above all, by converting that impressibility of heart to the most exalted moral uses.

If this be true in general, much more forcibly does it apply to the education of princes. Nothing short of the soundest, most rational, and, let me add, most religious education, can counteract the

dangers to which they are exposed. If the highest of our nobility, in default of some better way of guarding against the mischiefs of flatterers and dependents, deem it expedient to commit their sons to the wholesome equality of a public school, in order to repress their aspiring notions, and check the tendencies of their birth; — if they find it necessary to counteract the pernicious influence of domestic luxury, and the corrupting softness of domestic indulgence, by severity of study and closeness of application; — how much more indispensable is the spirit of this principle in the instance before us? The highest nobility have their equals, their competitors, and even their superiors. Those who are born within the sphere of royalty are destitute of all such extrinsic means of correction, and must be wholly indebted for their safety to the soundness of their principles, and the rectitude of their habits. Unless, therefore, the brightest light of reason be, from the very first, thrown upon their path, and the divine energies of our holy religion, both restraining and attractive, be brought as early as possible to act upon their feelings, the children of royalty, by the very fate of their birth, would be "of all men most miserable."

Let it not, however, be supposed, that any impracticable rigour is here recommended; or that it is conceived to be necessary that the gay period of childhood should be rendered gloomy or painful, whether in the cottage or the palace. The virtue which is aimed at, is not that of the Stoic

philosophy; nor do the habits which are deemed valuable, require the harshness of a Spartan education. Let nature, truth, and reason, be consulted; and let the child, and especially the royal child, be, as much as possible, trained according to their simple and consistent indications. The attention, in such instances as the present, should be the more watchful and unremitting, as counteracting influences are, in so exalted a station, necessarily multiplied, and every difficulty is at its greatest possible height. In a word, let not common sense, which is universal and eternal, be sacrificed to the capricious tastes of the child, or to the pliant principles of any who may approach her. But let the virtue and the happiness of the royal pupil be as simply, as feelingly, and as uniformly consulted, as if she were the daughter of a private gentleman. May this attention to her moral and mental cultivation be the supreme concern, from honest reverence to the offspring of such a race, from a dutiful regard to her own future happiness, and from reasonable attention to the well-being of those millions, whose earthly fate may be at this moment suspended on lessons, and habits, received by one providentially distinguished female!

CHAP. II.

ON THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE.

THE course of instruction for the Princess will, doubtless, be wisely adapted, not only to the duties, but to the dangers of her rank. The probability of her having one day functions to discharge, which in such exempt cases only fall to the lot of females, obviously suggests the expediency of an education not only superior to, but in certain respects distinct from, that of other women. What was formerly deemed necessary in an instance of this nature, may be inferred from the well-known attainments of the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey; and still more from the no less splendid acquirements of Queen Elizabeth. Of the erudition of the latter, we have a particular account from one, who was the fittest in that age to appreciate it, the celebrated Roger Ascham. He tells us, that when he read over with her the orations of Eschines and Demosthenes in Greek, she not only understood, at first sight, the full force and propriety of the language, and the meaning of the orators, but that she comprehended the whole scheme of the laws, customs, and manners of the Athenians. She possessed an exact and accurate knowledge of the Scriptures, and had committed

to memory most of the striking passages in them. She had also learned by heart many of the finest parts of Thucydides and Xenophon, especially those which relate to life and manners. Thus were her early years sedulously employed in laying in a large stock of materials for governing well. To what purpose she improved them, let her illustrious reign of forty-five years declare!

If the influence of her erudition on her subsequent prosperity should be questioned, let it be considered, that her intellectual attainments supported the dignity of her character, under foibles and feminine weaknesses, which would otherwise have sunk her credit; she had even address enough to contrive to give to those weaknesses a certain classic grace. Let it be considered, also, that whatever tended to raise her mind to a level with those whose services she was to use, and of whose counsels she was to avail herself, proportionably contributed to that mutual respect and confidence between the queen and her ministers, without which, the results of her government could not have been equally successful. Almost every man of rank was then a man of letters, and literature was valued accordingly. Had, therefore, deficiency of learning been added to inferiority of sex, we might not at this day have the reign of Elizabeth on which to look back, as the period in which administrative energy seemed to attain the greatest possible perfection.

Yet, though an extended acquaintance with ancient authors will be necessary now, as it was

then, in the education of a princess, a general knowledge of ancient languages, it is presumed, may be dispensed with. The Greek authors, at least, may doubtless be read with sufficient advantage through the medium of a translation; the spirit of the original being, perhaps, more transfusible into the English than into any other modern tongue. But are there not many forcible reasons why the Latin language should not be equally omitted? * Besides the advantage of reading, in their original dress, the historians of that empire, the literature of Rome is peculiarly interesting, as being the most satisfactory medium through which the moderns can obtain an intimate knowledge of the ancient world. As the Latin itself is a modification of one of the Greek dialects, so the Roman philosophers and poets, having formed themselves, as much as possible, on Grecian models, present to us the nearest possible transcripts of those masters whom they copy. Thus, by an acquaintance with the Latin language, we are brought into a kind of actual contact not only with the ancient world, but with that portion of it which, having the most direct and the fullest intercourse with the other parts, introduces us, in a manner the most informing and satisfactory, to classical and philosophical antiquity in general. But what

* The royal father of the illustrious pupil is said to possess the princely accomplishment of a pure classical taste. Of his love for polite learning, the attention which he is paying to the recovery of certain of the lost works of some of the Roman authors is an evidence.

is still more, the Latin tongue enables us for ourselves, without the intermediation of any interpreter, to examine all the particular circumstances in manners, intercourse, modes of thinking and speaking, of that period which Eternal Wisdom chose (probably because it was ever after to appear the most luminous in the whole retrospect of history) as fittest for the advent of the Messiah, and the bringing life and immortality to light by his Gospel.

If to this may be added lesser yet not unimportant considerations, we would say, that by the acquaintance which the Latin language would give her with the etymology of words, she will learn to be more accurate in her definitions, as well as more critically exact and elegant in the use of her own language; and her ability to manage it with gracefulness and vigour will be considerally increased. *

Of the modern languages, if the author dares hazard an opinion, the French and German seem the most necessary. The Italian appears less important, as those authors which seem more peculiarly to belong to her education, such as Davila, Guicciardin, and Beccaria, may be read either in French or English translations.

* Who does not consider as one of the most interesting passages of modern history, that which relates the effect produced by an eloquent Latin oration pronounced in a full assembly, by the late Empress Maria Theresa, in the bloom of her youth and beauty, so late as the year 1740? Antiquity produces nothing more touching of the kind.

It is not to be supposed that a personage, under her peculiar circumstances, should have much time to spare for the acquisition of what are called the fine arts; nor, perhaps, is it to be desired. To acquire them in perfection, would steal away too large a portion of those precious hours which will barely suffice to lay in the various rudiments of indispensable knowledge; and, in this fastidious age, whatever falls far short of perfection is deemed of little worth. A moderate skill in music, for instance, would probably have little other effect than to make the listeners feel, as Farinelli is said to have done, who used to complain heavily that the pension of 2000*l.* a-year, which he had from the King of Spain, was compensation little enough for his being sometimes obliged to hear his majesty play. Yet this would be a far less evil than that to which *excellence* might lead. We can think of few things more to be deprecated, than that those who have the greatest concerns to pursue should have their tastes engaged, perhaps monopolised, by trifles. A listener to the royal music, if possessed of either wisdom or virtue, could not but feel his pleasure at the most exquisite performance abated, by the apprehension that this perfection implied the neglect of matters far more essential.

Besides, to excel in those arts, which, though merely ornamental, are yet well enough adapted to ladies who have only a subordinate part to fill in life, would rather lessen than augment the dignity of a sovereign. It was a truly royal reply of

Themistocles, when he was asked if he could play on the lute — "No; but if you will give me a paltry village, I may perhaps know how to improve it into a great city."

These are imperial arts, and worthy kings.

As to these inferior accomplishments, is it not desirable, and is it not sufficient that a sovereign should possess that general knowledge and taste which give the power of discriminating excellence, so as judiciously to cherish, and liberally to reward it?

But, not only in works of mere taste, even in natural history, botany, experimental philosophy, and other generally valuable sciences, a correct but unlaboured outline of knowledge, it is presumed, will, in the present instance, be thought sufficient. Profitable and delightful as these pursuit are to others (and no one more admires them than the writer of this essay), yet the royal personage must not be examining plants, when she should be studying laws; nor investigating the instincts of animals, when she should be analysing the characters of men. The time so properly devoted to these studies in other educations will be little enough in this, to attain that knowledge of general history, and especially that accurate acquaintance with the events of our own country, which, in her situation, are absolutely indispensable.

Geography and chronology have not unfitly been termed the two eyes of history. With chronology she should be competently acquainted. It is

little to know events, if we do not know in what order and succession they are disposed. It is necessary also to learn how the periods of computation are determined. Method does not merely aid the memory, it also assists the judgment, by settling the dependence of one event upon another. Chronology is the grand art of historical arrangement. To know that a man of distinguished eminence has lived, is to know little, unless we know when he lived, and who were his contemporaries. Indistinctness and confusion must always perplex that understanding, in which the annals of past ages are not thus consecutively linked together.

Would it not be proper always to read history with a map, in order to keep up in the mind the indissoluble connection between history and geography; and that a glance of the country may recall the exploits of the hero, or the virtues of the patriot who has immortalised it?

Respecting the study of geography, I would observe, that many particulars, which do not seem to have been considered by the generality of writers, ought to be brought before the view of a royal pupil. The effects of local situation, and geographical boundary, on the formation and progress of nations and empires. — The consequences, for example, which have resulted as well in the political as in the civil and religious circumstances of mankind, from the Mediterranean being so aptly interposed, not so much as it should seem to be a common barrier, as to form a most convenient

and important medium of intercourse between Europe, Asia, and Africa. — The effect of this great *Naumachia* of the ancient world, in transferring empire from east to west; — the want of tides in the Mediterranean, so as to adapt this scene of early maritime adventure to the rudeness of those who were first to navigate it, and whose success might have been fatally impeded, by that diversity of currents, which in other seas the ebb and flow of the tides is perpetually creating.

In connection with this, though somewhat locally remote from it, is to be remarked the regularity of the monsoons in the Erythræan Sea, by means of which, the earlier traders between Africa and India were carried across the Persian Gulf, without the exercise of that skill, which as yet did not exist. — And, as if to facilitate the conveyance of those most interesting commodities to the Mediterranean, in order that the commerce of that inland ocean might never want an adequate stimulus, the Red Sea is carried onward, till it is separated from the Mediterranean by a comparatively narrow isthmus; an isthmus that seems providentially to have been retained, that while the maritime activity and general convenience of the ancient world was provided for, there might still be sufficient difficulty in the way to excite to a more extended circumnavigation, when the invention of the compass, the improvement of maritime skill, and the general progress of human society, should concur in bringing on the proper season.

And, in this geographic sketch, let not the remarkable position of Judea be forgotten *; placed in the very middle parts of the old world (whose extent may be reckoned from the Pillars of Hercules to "the utmost Indian isle Tabrobane"), as the sun in the centre of the solar system, and at the top of the Mediterranean, both that it might be within the vortex of great events, and also that when the fulness of time should come, it might be most conveniently situated for pouring forth that light of truth, of which it was destined to be the local origin, upon all the nations of the earth, and especially on the Roman empire. — Such are the less common particulars to which attention may advantageously be drawn. With geography in

* It is worthy of notice, that in all probability Judea was the country by means of which a trade was first opened between the Mediterranean and India. David had taken from the Edomites two cities at the Red Sea, *Ezion-Geber* and *Elath;* these, we are told, Solomon made sea-ports, and colonised them with navigators, furnished by the king of Tyre; of whom it is said, 2 Chron. viii. 18., that he sent unto Solomon ships and servants who had knowledge of the sea, and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir; and, 1 Kings, x. 22., we are told that Solomon had at sea a navy of Tarshish, with the navy of Hiram, which came once in three years, bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. Thus Tyre, the great emporium of the Mediterranean, was evidently indebted to David and Solomon for access to that commerce of the East, which was carried on by means of the Red Sea, and brought from the above-mentioned ports across the isthmus of Suez, probably to the same place where the Tyrians, in later times, unshipped their Asiatic commodities, the port of Rhinocorura.

general should of course be connected some knowledge of the natural and civil history of each country: its chief political revolutions, its alliances and dependences, together with the state of its arts, commerce, natural productions, government, and religion.

CHAP. III.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF FORMING THE MIND.

It is of the highest importance that the royal pupil should acquire an early habit of method and regularity in her studies. She should, therefore, be particularly guarded against that desultory manner of reading, too common at this day, and particularly with women. She should be trained always to study to some valuable purpose, and carefully to attend to the several waymarks, by means of which that end may most effectually be attained. She should be accustomed to call forth the forces of her mind, and to keep them alert, well-disciplined, and ready for service. She should so cultivate settled principles of action, as to acquire the habit of applying them, on demand, to the actual occasions of life; and should possess a promptitude, as well as soundness, in deducing consequences, and drawing conclusions. Her mind should be exercised with as much industry in the pursuit of moral truth and useful knowledge, as that of a young academic in the studies of his profession. The art of reigning is the profession of a prince. And, doubtless, it is a science which requires at least as much preparatory study as any other. Besides, one part of knowledge is often so

necessary for reflecting light on another part, that perhaps no one who does not understand many things, can understand any thing well.

But, whatever may be the necessary degree of knowledge, it is most certain that it cannot be attained amidst the petty avocations which occupy a modern lady's time. Knowledge will not come by nature or by chance. Precepts do not always convey it. Talents do not always insure it. It is the fruit of pains. It is the reward of application.

Dii *laboribus* omnia vendunt.

Let her ever bear in mind, she *is not to study that she may become learned, but that she may become wise.* It is by such an acquisition of knowledge as is here recommended, that her mind must be so enlarged and invigorated as to prepare her for following wise counsels, without blindly yielding to fortuitous suggestions; as to enable her to trace actions into their multifarious consequences, and to discover real analogies, without being deceived by superficial appearances of resemblance. It is thus that she must be secured from the dominion of the less enlightened. This will preserve her from credulity; prevent her from over-rating inferior talents, and help her to attain that *nil admirari*, which is so necessary for distinguishing arrogant pretension from substantial merit. It will aid her to appreciate the value of those around her; will assist her penetration in what regards her friends; preserve her from a blind

prejudice in choosing them, from retaining them through fear or fondness, and from changing them through weakness or caprice. "When we are abused through specious appearances," says the judicious Hooker, "it is because reason is negligent to search out the fallacy." But, he might have added, if reason be not cultivated early, if it be not exercised constantly, it will have no eye for discernment, no heart for vigorous exertion. Specious appearances will perpetually deceive that mind which has been accustomed to acquiesce in them through ignorance, blindness, and inaction.

A prince should be ignorant of nothing which it is honourable to know; but he should look on mere acquisition of knowledge not as the end to be rested in, but only as the means of arriving at some higher end. He may have been well instructed in history, belles lettres, philosophy, and languages, and yet have received a defective education, if the formation of his judgment has been neglected. For, it is not so important to know every thing, as to know the exact value of every thing, to appreciate what we learn, and to arrange what we know.

Books alone will never form the character. Mere reading would rather tend to make a pedantic, than an accomplished prince. It is *conversation* which must unfold, enlarge, and apply the use of books. Without that familiar comment on what is read, which will make a most important part of the intercourse between a royal pupil and the society around him, mere reading might only

fill the mind with fallacious models of character, and false maxims of life. It is *conversation* which must develope what is obscure, raise what is low, correct what is defective, qualify what is exaggerated, and gently and almost insensibly raise the understanding, form the heart, and fix the taste; and by giving just proportions to the mind, teach it the power of fair appreciation, draw it to adopt what is reasonable, to love what is good, to taste what is pure, and to imitate what is elegant.

But this is not to be effected by cold rules, and formal reflections; by insipid dogmas, and tedious sermonizing. It should be done so indirectly, so discreetly, and so pleasantly, that the pupil shall not be led to dread a lecture at every turn, nor a dissertation on every occurrence. While yet such an ingenious and cheerful turn may be given to subjects apparently unpromising, old truths may be conveyed by such new images, that the pupil will wonder to find herself improved when she thought she was only diverted. Folly may be made contemptible, affectation ridiculous, vice hateful, and virtue beautiful, by such seemingly unpremeditated means, as shall have the effect, without having the effort, of a lesson. Topics must not be so much proposed as insinuated.

But above all, there should be a constant, but imperceptible habit of turning the mind to a love of TRUTH in all its forms and aspects; not only in matters of grave morality, but in matters of business, of common intercourse, and even of taste;

for there is a truth both in moral and mental taste, little short of the exactness of mathematical truth; and the mind should acquire a habit of seeking perfection in every thing. This habit should be so early and insensibly formed, that when the pupil comes afterwards to meet with maxims and instances of truth and virtue, in historical and moral writings, she may bring to the perusal tastes, tempers, and dispositions, so laid in, as to have prepared the mind for their reception. As this mode of preparatory and incidental instruction will be gradual and inwoven, so it will be deep and durable; but as it will be little obvious to ordinary judges, it will excite less wonder and admiration than the usual display and exhibition so prevalent in modern education. Its effects will be less ostensible, but they will be more certain.

When it is considered how short is that period of life in which plain unvarnished truth will be likely to appear in all its naked simplicity before princes, is there a moment of that happy, that auspicious season to be lost, for presenting it to them in all its lovely and engaging forms? It is not enough that they should possess truth as a principle, they should cherish it as an object of affection, delight in it as a matter of taste, and dread nothing so much as false colouring and artifice.

He who possesses a sound principle, and strong relish of truth in his own mind, will possess a touchstone by which to try this quality in others, and which will enable him to detect false notions,

to see through false manners, and to despise false attractions. This discerning faculty is the more important, as the high breeding of very polished society presents so plausible an imitation of goodness, as to impose on the superficial observer, who, satisfied with the image and superscription, never enquires whether the coin be counterfeit or sterling.

The early habit of sifting questions, turning about a truth, and examining an argument on all sides, will strengthen the intellectual powers of the royal pupil, prevent her thoughts from wandering, accustom her to weigh fairly and resolve soundly; will conquer irresolution in her mind; preserve her from being easily deceived by false reasoning, startled by doubts, and confounded by objections. She will learn to digest her thoughts in an exact method, to acquire a logical order in the arrangement of them, to possess precision in her ideas, and its natural concomitant, perspicuity in her expression; all which will be of the highest inportance to one who may hereafter have so much to do and to say in public.

With the *shades* of expressions she should also be well acquainted, and be habituated to use the most apposite and the most correct; such as are neither too high nor too low, too strong nor too weak, for the occasion; such as are obvious but not vulgar, accurate but not pedantic, elegant but not artificial.

The memory should be stored with none but the best things, that when, hereafter, the judg-

ment is brought into exercise, it may find none but the best materials to act upon. Instead, therefore, of loading the memory, might it not be useful to establish it into a rule to read to her every day, as an amusement, and distinctly from all regular instruction, a passage from the history of England, a story out of Plutarch, or any similar author; and require of her to repeat it afterwards in her own words? This would not only add, daily, one important fact to her stock of knowledge, but would tend to form a perspicuous and elegant style. Occasion would also be furnished for observing whether she exhibited that best proof of good sense, the seizing on the prominent features of the story, laying less stress on what was less important.

But while accuracy is thus sought, the still more important habit of comprehensiveness must not be overlooked. Her mind should be trained to embrace a wide compass; it should be taught to take in a large whole, and then subdivide it into parts; each of which should be considered distinctly, yet connectedly, with strict attention to its due proportions, relative situations, its bearings with respect to the others, and the dependence of each part on the whole. Where, however, so many things are to be known, and so many to be done, it is impossible to attend equally to all. It is therefore important, that, in any case of competition, the less material be left unlearned and undone; and that petty details never fill the time and mind, at the expense of neglecting great objects.

For those, therefore, who have much business and little time, it is a great and necessary art to learn to extract the essential spirit of an author from the body of his work; to know how to seize on the vital parts; to discern where his strength lies; and to separate it from those portions of the work which are superfluous, collateral, or merely ornamental.

On the subject of economising time, the writer would have been fearful of incurring the charge of needless strictness, by suggesting the utility of accustoming princes to be read to while they are dressing, could not the actual practice of our admirable Queen Mary may be adduced to sanction the advice. That excellent princess, from a conscientious regard to the value of time, was either read to by others, or condescended, herself, to read aloud, that those who were employed about her person might share the benefit, which she enhanced by such pleasant and judicious remarks as the subject suggested. But there is an additional reason why the *children* of the great would be benefited by this habit; for it would not only turn idle moments to some account, but would be of use in another way, by cutting off the fairest occasions which their inferior attendants can have for engaging them, by frivolous or flattering discourse.

It would be well to watch attentively the bent of the mind in the hours of relaxation and amusement, when caution is dismissed by the pupil, and control by the preceptor; when no studies are im-

posed and no specific employment suggested. In fact, when vigilance appears to sleep, it should be particularly on the alert, in order to discern those tendencies and dispositions which will then most naturally unfold themselves; and because that the heart, being at those seasons less under discipline, will be more likely to betray its native character. And as the regulation of the temper is that part of education on which the whole happiness of life most materially depends, no occasion should be neglected, no indication slighted, no counteraction omitted, which may contribute to accomplish so important an end.

The peculiar defects, not merely such faults as are incident to childhood, but the predominating faults of the individual, should be carefully watched, lest they acquire strength through neglect, when they might have been diminished by a counteracting force. If the temper be restless, ardent, and impetuous, weariness and discontent will, hereafter, fill up the dreary intervals between one animating scene and another, unless the temper be subdued and tranquillised by a constant habit of quiet, though varied and interesting occupation. Few things are more fatal to the mind, than to depend for happiness on the contingent recurrence of events, businesses, and diversions, which inflame and agitate it; for as they do not often occur, the intervals which are long are also languid; the enjoyment is factitious happiness; the privation is actual misery.

Reading, therefore, has, especially to a prince,

its moral uses, independently of the nature of the study itself. It brings no small gain, if it secure him from the dominion of turbulent pursuits and agitating pleasures. If it snatch him, on the one hand, from public schemes of ambition and false glory; and if it rescue him, on the other, from the habit of forming petty projects of incessant diversion, the rudiments of a trifling and useless life.

Knowledge, therefore, is often the preservative of virtue; and, next to right habits of sentiment and conduct, the best human source of happiness. Could Louis the Fourteenth have *read*, probably the edict of Nantz had not been revoked. But a restless temper, and a vacant mind, unhappily lighting on absolute power, present, in this monarch, a striking instance of the fatal effects of ignorance, and the calamity of a neglected education. He had a good natural understanding, loved business, and seemed to have a mind capable of comprehending it. Many of his recorded expressions are neat and elegant. But he was uninstructed upon system; Cardinal Mazarine, with a view to secure his own dominion, having withheld from him all the necessary means of education. Thus, he had received no ideas from books; he even hated in others the learning which he did not himself possess: the terms *wit* and *scholar*, were, in his mind, terms of reproach; the one as implying satire, the other pedantry. He wanted not application to public affairs; and habit had given him some experience in them. But the apathy which marked his latter years strongly illustrated the infelicity of

an unfurnished mind. This, in the tumult of his brighter days, amidst the succession of intrigues, the splendour of festivity, and the bustle of arms, was scarcely felt. But ambition and voluptuousness cannot always be gratified. Those ardent passions, which in youth were devoted to licentiousness, in the meridian of life to war, in a more advanced age to bigotry and intolerance, not only had never been directed by religion, but had never been softened by letters. After he had renounced his mistresses at home, and his unjust wars abroad, even though his mind seems to have acquired some pious tendencies, his life became a a scene of such inanity and restlessness, that he was impatient at being, for a moment, left alone. He had no intellectual resources. The agitation of great events had subsided. From never having learned either to employ himself in reading or thinking, his life became a blank, from which he could not be relieved by the sight of his palaces, his gardens, and his aqueducts, the purchase of depopulated villages and plundered cities.

Indigent amid all his possessions, he exhibited a striking confirmation of the declaration of Solomon, concerning the unsatisfying nature of all earthly pleasures; and showed, that it is in vain even for kings to hope to obtain from others those comforts, and that contentment, which man can derive only from within himself.

CHAP. IV.

THE EDUCATION OF A SOVEREIGN A SPECIFIC EDUCATION.

THE formation of the character is the grand object to be accomplished. This should be considered to be not so much a separate business, as a sort of centre to which all the rays of instruction should be directed. All the studies, it is presumed, of the royal pupil, should have some reference to her probable future situation. Is it not, therefore, obviously requisite that her understanding be exercised in a wider range than that of others of her sex; and that her principles be so established, on the best and surest foundation, as to fit her at once for fulfilling the peculiar demands, and for resisting the peculiar temptations of her station? Princes have been too often inclined to fancy, that they have few interests in common with the rest of mankind, feeling themselves placed by Providence on an eminence so much above them. But the great aim should be, to correct the haughtiness which may attend this superiority, without relinquishing the truth of the fact. Is it not, therefore, the business of those who have the care of a royal education, not so much to deny the reality of this distance, or to

diminish its amount, as to account for its existence, and point out the uses to which it is subservient?

A prince is an individual being, whom the hand of Providence has placed on a pedestal of peculiar elevation; but he should learn, that he is placed there as the minister of good to others; that the dignity being hereditary, he is the more manifestly raised to that elevation, not by his own merit, but by providential destination; by those laws, which he is himself bound to observe with the same religious fidelity as the meanest of his subjects. It ought early to be impressed, that those appendages of royalty, with which human weakness may too probably be fascinated, are intended not to gratify the feelings, but to distinguish the person of the monarch; that, in themselves, they are of little value; that they are beneath the attachment of a rational, and of no substantial use to a moral, being; in short, that they are not a subject of triumph, but are to be acquiesced in for the public benefit, and from regard to that weakness of our nature, which subjects so large a portion of every community to the influence of their imagination and their senses.

While, therefore, a prince is taught the use of those exterior embellishments, which, as was before observed, designate, rather than dignify, his station; while he is led to place the just value on every appendage which may contribute to give him importance in the eyes of the multitude; who, not being just judges of what constitutes true dignity, are consequently apt to reverence the royal person

exactly so far as they see outward splendour connected with it; should not a royal pupil himself be taught, instead of overvaluing that splendour, to think it a humbling, rather than an elevating, consideration, that so large a part of the respect paid to him should be owing to such extrinsic causes, to causes which make no part of himself? Let him, then, be taught to gratify the public with all the pomp and circumstance suitable to royalty; but let him never forget, that, though his station ought always to procure for him respect, he must ever look to his own personal conduct, for inspiring veneration, attachment, and affection; and ever let it be remembered, that this affection is the strongest tie of obedience; that subjects like to see their prince great, when that greatness is not produced by rendering them less; and as the profound Selden observes, "the people will always be liberal to a prince who spares them, and a good prince will always spare a liberal people."

This is not a period when any wise man would wish to diminish either the authority or the splendour of kings. So far from it, he will support, with his whole weight, an institution which the licentious fury of a revolutionary spirit has rendered more dear to every Englishman. On no consideration, therefore, would he pluck even a feather from those decorations of royalty, which, by a long association, have become intimately connected with its substance. In short, every wise inhabitant of the British isles must feel, that he who would despoil the crown of its jewels,

would not be far from spoiling the wearer of his crown. And as nothing but democratic folly or frenzy would degrade the monarch from his due elevation, so democratic envy alone would wish to strip him, not only of a single constituent of real greatness, but even of a single ornamental appendage, on which the people have been accustomed to gaze with honest joy.

Nevertheless, those outrages which have lately been committed against the sanctity of the throne furnish new and most powerful reasons for assiduously guarding princes, by every respectful admonition, against any tendency to exceed their just prerogatives, and for checking every rising propensity to overstep, in the slightest degree, their well-defined rights.

At the same time it should be remembered, that there may be no less dangerous faults on the other side, and that want of firmness in maintaining just rights, or of spirit in the prompt and vigorous exercise of necessary authority, may prove as injurious to the interests of a community as the most lawless stretch of power. Defects of this very kind were evidently among the causes of bringing down, on the gentlest of the kings of France, more calamities than had ever resulted from the most arbitrary exertion of power in any of his predecessors. Feebleness and irresolution, which seem to be little more than pardonable weaknesses in private persons, may, by their consequences, prove in princes fatal errors; and even produce the effect of great crimes. Vigour to secure, and opportunely to

exert, their constitutional power, is as essential as moderation not to exceed it. *

It serves to show the inestimable value of well-defined laws, and the importance of making the prince acquainted with them, that Louis the Thirteenth conceived a jealousy respecting his own power, because he did not understand the nature of it; and his favourites were unable or unwilling to instruct him. But his usurpation of extraordinary power tended to exalt his minister still more than himself; and in setting the King above the laws, he still set the Cardinal above the King.

The power of the monarchs of France had never been defined by any written law. Charles V., Louis IX., and perhaps a very few other wise and temperate princes, did not conceive their power to be above the laws, but approved of those moderating maxims which had become, by degrees, the received usages of the state, and which, while they seemed, in some measure, a constitutional

* May it not be observed, without risking the imputation of flattery, that perhaps never, in the history of the world, has any country been so uninterruptedly blessed with that very temperament of government, which is here implied, as this empire has been, under the dominion of the House of Hanover? There has, on no occasion, been a want of firmness: but with that firmness there has been a conscientious regard to the principles of the constitution. Who can at this moment pretend to pronounce how much we owe to the steady integrity which is so obviously possessed by our present sovereign? And who does not remember with what good effects his resolute composure and dignified firmness were exerted, during a scene of the greatest alarm which has occurred in his reign — the riots of the year 1780.

check upon the absolute power of the crown, formed also a guard against that popular licentiousness, which, in a pure despotism, appears to be the only resource left to the people. But France has had few monarchs like Charles V. and still fewer like Louis IX. Henry IV. seems to have found and observed the happy medium. He was at once resolute and mild; determined and affectionate; politic and humane. The firmness of his mind, and the active vigour of his conduct, always kept pace with the gentleness of his language. He fought for his prerogatives bravely, and defended them vigorously; yet it is said he ever carefully avoided the term. He also loved and sought popularity, but he never sacrificed to it any just claim, nor ever made a concession which did not also tend to guard the real prerogatives of the crown. * And it seems to be the true wisdom of a prince, that, as he cannot be too deliberate in his councils, nor too cautious in his plans, so when those counsels are well matured, and those plans well digested, he cannot be too decisive in their execution.

It was not, indeed, under the actual rule of monarchs, however arbitrary, that royal authority was raised to its highest pitch in France. It was Richelieu, who, under a regency, rapidly established such a system of tyranny, as the boldest sovereign had seldom dared to attempt. He improved on all the anterior corruptions; and, as a

* Il ne se defioit pas des loix, parcequ'il se fioit en lui meme. De Retz.

lively French author says, tried to conceal their being corruptions, by erecting them into political maxims. Mazarin, with inferior ability, which would not have enabled him to *give* the impulse, attempted still more to accelerate the movement of that machine which his predecessor had set a-going with such velocity; and a civil war was the consequence.

Happily, the examples of neither the kings, the laws, nor the constitution of France, can be strictly applicable to us. Happily, also, we live at a time when genuine freedom is so completely established among us; when the constitution, powers, and privileges of parliament are so firmly settled; the limits of the royal prerogative so exactly defined, and so fully understood; and the mild, moderate, and equitable spirit of the illustrious family in which it is invested is withal so conspicuous, that, as Blackstone observes, "topics of government, which, like the mysteries of the Bona Dea, were formerly thought too sacred to be divulged to any but the initiated, may now, without the smallest offence, be fully and temperately discussed."

At this tumultuous period, when we have seen almost all the thrones of Christendom trembling to their foundation, we have witnessed the British constitution, like the British oak, confirmed and rooted by the shaking of that tremendous blast which has stripped kingdoms of their crowns, levelled the fences and inclosures of law, laid waste the best earthly blessings of mankind, and involved in desolation a large part of the civilised

world. When we have beheld absolute monarchies, and republican states, alike ravaged by the tempest, shall we not learn still more highly to prize our own unparalleled political edifice, built with such fair proportions, on principles so harmonious and so just, that one part affords to another that support which, in its turn, it receives; while each lends strength as well as stability to all?

How slender is the security of unlimited power, let the ephemeral reigns of eastern despots declare! A prince who governs a free people enjoys a safety which no despotic sovereign ever possessed. The latter rules singly; and where a revolution is meditated, the change of a single person is soon effected. But where a sovereign's power is incorporated with the powers of parliament, and the will of the people who elect parliaments, the kingly state is fenced in with, and intrenched by, the other states. He relies not solely upon an army. He relies on his parliament, and on his people, — a sure resource, while he involves his interests with theirs! This is the happiness, the beauty, and the strength of that threefold bond which ties our constitution together. Counsellors may mislead, favourites may betray, even armies may desert, and navies may mutiny, but LAWS, as they are the surest guides of action, so are they the surest guards from danger.

Well might the view of this well-founded power produce the remark which it drew forth from a sagacious Frenchman *, who was comparing the

* Gourville.

solid constitutional authority of the British monarch with the more specious but less secure fabric of the despotism of the kings of France — " That a King of England, who acted according to the laws, was the greatest of all monarchs ! "

But while the convulsions of other governments, built on less permanent principles, have rivetted our affection to our own; and while an experimental acquaintance with the miseries of anarchy most naturally lead us, as subjects, to a strong sense of the duty of obedience; — with equal zeal would we wish it to be inculcated on princes, that they should be cautious never to multiply occasions for exacting that obedience; that they should use no unnecessary compulsion by seizing as a debt what good subjects are always willing to pay as a duty; and what is then only to be relied upon, when it is spontaneous and cordial.

It is observable, that those monarchs who have most sedulously contended for prerogative have been among the feeblest and the least capable of exercising it; and that those who have struggled most earnestly for unjust power have seldom enjoyed it themselves, but have made it over to mistresses and favourites. This is particularly exemplified in two of our weakest and most unhappy princes, Edward II. and Richard II.; whether it was that this very imbecility made them more contentious about their prerogative, and more obstinate in resisting the demands of parliament, or that their favourites stimulated them to exactions, the benefit of which was to be transferred to themselves. The character of Edward III.

(notwithstanding his faults) was consistently magnanimous. He was not more brave than just. He was attentive to the dignity of his crown in proportion to that magnanimity, and to the creation and execution of laws in proportion to that justice; and he took no important steps without the advice of parliament. The wretched reign and miserable catastrophe of each of the two first-named princes furnish a striking contrast to the energy and popularity of the last; of whom Hume observes, "that his domestic government was even more admirable than his foreign conquests;" and of whom Selden says, "that one would think by his actions that he never was at home, and by his laws that he never was abroad."

A wise and virtuous prince will ever bear in mind the grand distinction between his own situation and that of his minister. The latter is but the precarious possessor of a transient authority; a mere tenant at will, or, at most, for life. He himself is the hereditary and permanent possessor of the property. The former may be more tempted to adopt measures which, though gainful or gratifying at the present, will be probably productive of future mischief to the estate. But surely the latter may be justly expected to take a longer and wider view; and, considering the interests of his posterity no less than his own, to reject all measures which are likely to disparage their inheritance, or injure their tenure. He will trace the misfortunes of our first Charles to the usurpation of the Tudors; and mark but too

natural a connection between the unprincipled domination and profuse magnificence of Louis XIV. and the melancholy fate of his far better and more amiable successor. He will remember the solid answer of the Spartan king, who being reproached by a superficial observer with having left the regal power impaired to his posterity, replied, "No; for he had left it more *secure*, therefore more *permanent*." A large and just conception of interest, therefore, no less than of duty, will prompt a wise prince to reject all measures which, while they appear to flatter the love of dominion, naturally inherent in the mind of man, by holding forth the present extension of his power, yet tend obstinately to weaken its essential strength; to make his authority the object of his people's jealousy, rather than of their affection; to cause it to rest on the uncertain basis of military power, rather than on the deep and durable foundations of the constitution.

In order to enable him the better, therefore, to know the true nature and limits of his authority, he will endeavour to develope the constitutional foundations on which it rests. Sovereigns, even female sovereigns, though they cannot have leisure to become fully acquainted with the vast mass of our laws, ought, at least, to imbibe the spirit of them. If they be not early taught the general principles of our laws and constitution, they may be liable from the flatterers to whom they may be exposed to hear of nothing but the power which they may exert, or the influence which they may

exercise, without having their attention directed to those counteracting principles, which, in a limited monarchy like ours, serve, in numberless ways, to balance and restrain that power.

It should be worked into a principle in the mind, that it is in consideration of the duties which the laws impose on a prince, that those laws have secured to him either dignity or prerogative; it being a maxim of the law, that protection and allegiance are reciprocal. With the impression of the power, the splendour, and the dignity of royalty, the ideas of trust, duty, and responsibility, should be inseparably interwoven. It should be assiduously inculcated, that the LAWS form the very basis of the throne, the root and ground-work of the monarch's political existence. One peculiar reason why a prince ought to know so much of the laws and constitution, as to be able to determine what is, and what is not, an infringement of them, is, that he may be quick-sighted to the slightest approximation of ministers towards any such encroachments. A farther reason is, that by studying the laws and constitution of the country, he may become more firmly attached to them, not merely by national instinct and fond prejudice, because they are his *own*, but from judgment, reason, knowledge, discrimination, preference, habit, obligation, — in a word, because they are the *best*.

But as this superficial sketch proposes not to be an essay on political, but moral instruction, these remarks are only hazarded, in order to intimate

the peculiar turn which the royal education ought to take. If a sovereign of England be, in such a variety of respects, supreme, it follows not only that his education should be liberal, large, and general, but that it should, moreover, be directed to a knowledge of those departments in which he will be called to preside.

As supreme magistrate and the source of all judicial power, he should be adequately acquainted, not only with the law of nature and of nations, but particularly with the law of England. As possessing the power of declaring war, and contracting alliances, he should be thoroughly conversant with those authors who, with the soundest judgment, the deepest moral views, and the most correct precision, treat of the great principles of political justice; who best unfold the rights of human nature, and the mischiefs of unjust ambition. He should be competently acquainted with the present state of the different governments of Europe, with which that of Great Britain may have any political relation; and he should be led to exercise that intuitive discernment of character and talents, which will enable him to decide on the choice of ambassadors and other foreign ministers, whom it is his prerogative to appoint.

As he is the fountain of honour, from which proceed titles, distinctions, and offices, he should be early accustomed to combine a due attention to character, with the examination of claims, and the appreciation of services; in order that the honours of the subject may reflect no dishonour on the

prince. Those whose distinguished lot it is to bestow subordinate offices and inferior dignities, should evince, by the judgment with which they confer them, how fit they themselves are to discharge the highest.

Is he supreme head of the church? Hence arises a strong obligation to be acquainted with ecclesiastical history in general, as well as with the history of the church of England in particular. He should learn, not merely from habit and prescription, but from an attentive comparison of our national church with other ecclesiastical institutions, to discern both the distinguishing characters and appropriate advantages of our church establishment. He ought to enquire in what manner its interests are interwoven with those of the state, so far as to be inseparable from them. He should learn, that from the supreme power with which the laws invest him over the church, arises a most awful responsibility, especially in the grand prerogative of bestowing the higher ecclesiastical appointments, — a trust which involves consequences far too extensive for human minds to calculate; and which a sovereign, even amid all the dazzling splendour of royalty, while he preserves tenderness of conscience, and quickness of sensibility, will not reflect on without trepidation. While history offers numberless instances of the abuse of this power, it records numberless striking examples of its proper application. It even presents some, in which good sense has operated usefully in the absence of all principle. When a profligate eccle-

siastic applied for preferment to the profligate Duke of Orleans, while regent of France, urging as a motive, that he should be dishonoured if the duke did not make him a bishop; — "And I," replied the regent, "shall be dishonoured if I do."

CHAP. V.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING ANCIENT HISTORY.

THOSE pious persons do not seem to understand the true interests of Christianity, who forbid the study of Pagan literature. That it is of little value, comparatively with Christian learning, does not prove it to be altogether without its usefulness. In the present period of critical investigation, heathen learning seems to be justly appreciated in the scale of letters; the wisdom and piety of some of our most eminent contemporaries having successfully applied it to its noblest office, by rendering it subservient to the purposes of Revelation, in multiplying the evidences, and illustrating the proofs. Thus the Christian emperor, when he destroyed the heathen temples, consecrated the golden vessels to adorn the Christian churches.

In this enlightened period religion, our religion at least, does not, as in her days of darkness, feel it necessary to degrade human learning in order to withdraw herself from scrutiny. The time is past when it was produced as a serious charge against Saint Jerome, that he had read Homer; when a doctor of the Sorbonne penitently confessed, among his other sins, that the exquisite

muse of Virgil had made him weep for the woes of Dido; and when the works of Tacitus were condemned to the flames from the Papal chair, because the author was not a Roman Catholic. It is also curious to observe a Papist persecuting the memory of a pagan on the ground of his *superstition!* Pope Gregory the Great expelled Livy from every Christian library on this account!

The most acute enemy of Christianity, the Emperor Julian, who had himself been bred a Christian and a scholar, well understood what was most likely to hurt its cause. He knew the use which the Christians were making of ancient authors, and of rhetoric, in order to refute error and establish truth. — "They fight us," said he, "by the knowledge of our own authors; shall we suffer ourselves to be stabbed with our own swords?" He actually made a law to interdict their reading Homer and Demosthenes; prohibited to their schools the study of antiquity, and ordered that they should confine themselves to the explanation of Matthew and Luke in the churches of the Galileans.

It can never be too soon for the royal pupil to begin to collect materials for reflection and for action. Her future character will much depend on the course of reading, the turn of temper, the habit of thought now acquired, and the standard of morals now fixed. The acquisition of present tastes will form the elements of her subsequent character. Her present acquirements, it is true, will need to be matured by her after-experience;

but experience will operate to comparatively little purpose, where only a slender stock has been laid in for it to work upon; and where these materials for forming the character have not been previously prepared. Things must be known before they are done. The part should be studied before it is acted, if we expect to have it acted well.

Where much is to be learned, time must be economised; and in the judicious selection of Pagan literature, the discernment of the preceptor will be particularly exercised. All those writers, however justly celebrated, who have employed much learning in elaborating points which add little to the practical wisdom or virtue of mankind; all such as are rather curious than useful, or ingenious than instructive, should be passed over; nor need she bestow much attention on points which, though they may have been accurately discussed, are not seriously important. Dry critical knowledge, though it may be correctly just; and mere chronicles of events, though they may be strictly true, teach not the things she wants. Such authors as Sallust, who, in speaking of turbulent innovators, remarks, *that they thought the very disturbance of things established a sufficient bribe to set them at work*; those who, like this exquisite historian, unfold the internal principles of action, and dissect the hearts and minds of their personages, who develope complicated circumstances, furnish a clue to trace the labyrinth of causes and effects, and assign to every incident its proper motive, will be eminently useful. But, if she be taught to discern

the merits of writers, it is that she may become not a critic in books, but in human nature.

History is the glass by which the royal mind should be dressed. If it be delightful for a private individual to enter with the historian into every scene which he describes, and into every event which he relates; to be introduced into the interior of the Roman senate, or the Athenian Areopagus; to follow Pompey to Pharsalia, Miltiades to Marathon, or Marlborough to Blenheim; how much more interesting will this be to a sovereign? To him, for whom senates debate, for whom armies engage, and who is himself to be a prime actor in the drama! Of how much more importance is it to *him* to possess an accurate knowledge of all the successive governments of that world, in a principal government of which he is one day to take the lead! — to possess himself of the experience of ancient states, of the wisdom of every antecedent age! — to learn moderation from the ambition of one, caution from the rashness of another, and prudence, perhaps, from the indiscretion of both! — to apply foregone examples to his own use; adopting what is excellent, shunning what is erroneous, and omitting what is irrelevant!

Reading and observation are the two grand sources of improvement; but they lie not equally open to all. From the latter, the sex and habits of a royal female, in a good measure, exclude her. She must then, in a greater degree, depend on the information which books afford, opened and illustrated by her preceptor. Though her personal

observation must be limited, her advantages from historical sources may be large and various.

If history for a time, especially during the reign of the prince whose actions are recorded, sometimes misrepresent characters, the dead, even the royal dead, are seldom flattered; unless, which, indeed, too frequently happens, the writer is deficient in that just conception of moral excellence, which teaches to distinguish what is splendid from what is solid. But, sooner or later, history does justice. She snatches from oblivion, or reproach, the fame of those virtuous men, whom corrupt princes, not contented with having sacrificed them to their unjust jealousy, would rob also of their fair renown. When Arulenus Rusticus was condemned by Domitian, for having written, with its deserved eulogium, the life of that excellent citizen, Thrasea Pœtus; — when Senecio was put to death by the same emperor, for having rendered the like noble justice to Helvidius Priscus; — when the historians themselves, like the patriots whom they celebrated, were sentenced to death, their books also being condemned to the flames; — when Fannia, the incomparable wife of Helvidius, was banished, having the courage to carry into exile that book which had been the cause of it; a book, of which her conjugal piety had furnished the materials: — "In the fire which consumed these books," says the author of the life of Agricola, "the tyrants imagined that they had stifled the very utterance of the Roman people, abolished the lawful power of the senate, and forced man-

kind to doubt of the very evidence of their senses. Having expelled philosophy, and exiled science, they flattered themselves that nothing which bore the stamp of virtue would exist."* — But history has vindicated the noble sufferers. Pœtus and Helvidius will ever be ranked among the most honourable patriots; while the emperor, who in destroying their lives could not injure their reputation, is consigned to eternal infamy.

The examples which history records furnish faithful admonitions to succeeding princes, respecting the means by which empires are erected and overturned. They show by what arts of wisdom, or by what neglect of those arts, little states become great, or great states fall into ruin; with what equity or injustice wars have been undertaken; with what ability or incapacity they have been conducted; with what sagacity or short-sightedness treaties have been formed; how national faith has been maintained or forfeited; how confederacies have been made or violated. History, which is the amusement of other men, is the school of princes. They are not to read it merely as the rational occupation of a vacant hour, but to consult it as a storehouse of materials for the art of government.

There is a splendour in heroic actions, which fires the imagination, and forcibly lays hold on the passions. Hence, the poets were the first, and, in the rude ages of antiquity, the only historians. They seized on whatever was dazzling in character,

* Beginning of Tacitus's Life of Agricola.

or shining in action; exaggerated heroic qualities, immortalised patriotism, and deified courage. But, instead of making their heroes patterns to men, they lessened the utility of their example, by elevating them into gods.

Hence, however, arose the first idea of history; of snatching the deeds of illustrious men from the delusions of fable; of bringing down extravagant powers, and preternatural faculties, within the limits of human nature and possibility; and reducing overcharged characters to the size and shape of real life; giving proportion, order, and arrangement to the widest scheme of action, and to the most extended duration of time.

CHAP. VI.

LAWS. — EGYPT. — PERSIA.

But however the fictions of poetry might have given being to history, it was sage political institutions, good governments, and wise laws, which formed both its solid basis and its valuable superstructure. And it is from the labours of ancient legislators, the establishment of states, the foundation of goverments, and the progress of civil society, that we are to look for more real greatness and more useful instruction, than from all the extravagant exploits recorded in the fabulous ages of antiquity.

So deep is the reverential awe which mankind have uniformly blended with the idea of laws, that almost all civilised nations have affected to wrap up the origin of them in the obscurity of a devout mystery, and to intimate that they sprang from a divine source. This has arisen partly from a love of the marvellous inherent in the human mind; partly from the vanity of a national fondness in each country, for losing their original in the trackless paths of impenetrable antiquity. Of the former of these tastes, a legislator, like Numa, who had deep views, and who knew how much the people reverence whatever is mysterious, would

naturally avail himself. And his supposed divine communication was founded in his consummate knowledge of the human mind, a knowledge which a wise prince will always turn to good account.

But, however the mysteriousness of the origin of laws may excite the reverence of the vulgar, it is the wise only who will duly venerate their sanctity, as they alone can appreciate their value. LAWS are providentially designed not only to be the best subsidiary aid of religion, where she is operative, but to be in some sort her substitute, in those instances where her own direct operations might be ineffectual. For, even where the immediate law of God is little regarded, the civil code may be externally efficient, from its sanctions being more visible, palpable, tangible. And human laws are directly fitted to restrain the outward acts of those, whose hearts are not influenced by the divine injunctions. Laws, therefore, are the surest fences of the best blessings of civilised life. They bind society together, while they strengthen the separate interests of those whom they reciprocally unite. They tie the hands of depredation in the poor, and of oppression in the rich; protect the weak against the encroachments of the powerful, and draw their sacred shelter round all that is dear in domestic, or valuable in social life. They are the truest guardians of the dignity of the throne, and the only rampart of the liberty of the people.

On the law of nature, and the law of revelation

(where revelation is known), all human laws ought to depend. That a rule of civil conduct should be prescribed to man, by the state in which he lives, is made necessary by nature, as well as sanctioned by revelation. Were man an insulated being, the law of nature, and of revelation, would suffice for him; but for aggregate man, something more than even municipal laws becomes requisite. Divided as human beings are into separate states and societies, connected among themselves, but disconnected with other states, each requires, with relation to the other, certain general rules called the law of nations, as much as each state needs, respecting itself, those distinct codes, which are suited to their own particular exigencies. On the whole, then, as the natural sense of weakness and fear impels man to seek the protection, and the blessing of laws, so from the experience of that protection, and the sense of that blessing, his reason derives the most powerful argument to desire their perpetuation; and his providential destiny becomes his choice.

If, therefore, we would truly estimate the value of laws, let us figure to ourselves the misery of that state of nature in which there should be no law, but that of the strongest; no judge to determine right, or to punish wrong; to redress suffering, or to repel injury; to protect the weak, or to control the powerful.

If, under the prevalence of a false, and even absurd religion, several ancient states, that of Egypt in particular, subsisted in so much splen-

dour * for so long a period, and afterwards sunk into such abject depression, the causes of both are obvious. The LAWS of ancient Egypt were proverbial for their wisdom. It has not escaped several Christian historians, that it was the human praise of him, who was ordained to be the legislator of God's own people, that *he was skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians.* And it was meant to confer an high eulogium on the wisest of the kings of Israel, that his wisdom eclipsed that of Egypt.

The laws of this state so strongly enforced mercy, that they punished with death those who refused to save the life of a fellow-creature, if attacked, when it was in their power. The justice of the Egyptian laws was so inflexible, that the kings obliged the judges to swear that they would never depart from the principles of rectitude, though even in obedience to the royal command. Their respect for individual virtue, and for that reputation which follows it, was so high, that a

* It is to be observed, that this splendour alludes to the prosperity arising from wise political institutions merely; for the private morals of Egypt must have borne some proportion to her corrupt idolatry, which afterwards became of the most degrading and preposterous kind. Her wisdom, we must therefore infer, was chiefly *political* wisdom. Her morality seems to have been, in a good measure, cultivated with a view to aggrandise the state, and in violation of many natural feelings, as was the case in Sparta. Egypt was a well-compacted political society, and her virtue appears to have been the effect of political discipline. In enumerating her merits, *our* object is, to prove the great importance of LAWS.

kind of moral inquisition was appointed, on the death of every citizen, to enquire what sort of life he had lived, that his memory might be accordingly had in honour or detestation. From the verdict of this solemn tribunal, even their kings themselves were not exempted.

The whole aim and end of education among them was to inspire a veneration for GOVERNMENT and RELIGION. They had a law which assigned some employment to every individual of the state. And though the genius of our free constitution would justly reprobate, what indeed its temperate and judicious restraints render unnecessary among us, that clause which directed that the employment should be perpetuated in the same family; yet, perhaps, the severe moralist, with the example of the well-ordered government of Egypt before his eyes, might reasonably doubt whether a law, the effect of which was to keep men in their places, though it might now and then check the career of a lofty genius, was not a much less injury to society than the free scope which was afforded to the turbulent ambition of every aspiring spirit in the Greek democracies. Bossuet, who has, perhaps, penetrated more deeply into these subjects than almost any modern, has pronounced Egypt to be the fountain of all political wisdom.

What afterwards plunged the Egyptians into calamity, and brought final dissolution on their government? It was a departure from its constitutional principles; it was the neglect and contempt of those venerable laws which, for *sixteen*

centuries, had constituted their glory and their happiness. They exchanged the love of their wise domestic institutions for the ambition of subduing distant countries. One of their most heroic sovereigns (as is not unusual) was the instrument of their misfortunes. Sesostris was permitted, by Divine Providence, to diminish the true glory of Egypt, by a restless ambition to extend her territory. This splendid prince abandoned the real grandeur of governing wisely at home, for the false glory of foreign conquests, which detained him nine years in distant climates. At a remote period, the people, weary of the blessings they had so long enjoyed under a single monarch, weakened the royal power, by dividing it among multiplied sovereigns.

What exalted the ancient Persians to such lasting fame? The equity and strict execution of their LAWS. It was their sovereign disdain of falsehood in their public transactions. Their considering fraud as the most degrading of vices, and thus transfusing the spirit of their laws into their conduct. It was that love of justice (modern statesmen would do well to imitate the example) which made them oblige themselves to commend the virtues of their enemies. It was such an extraordinary respect for education, that no sorrow was ever expressed for young persons who died uninstructed. It was by paying such an attention to the children of the sovereign, that, at the age of fourteen, they were placed under the care of four statesmen, who excelled in different talents. By

one they were instructed in the principles of justice; by another they were taught to subdue sensuality; by a third they were initiated in the art of government, and by a fourth, in the duties of religion. Plato has given a beautiful sketch of this accomplished and sublime education.

It will be found, that nearly the same causes which forwarded the ruin of Egypt contributed to destroy Persia; a dereliction of those fundamental principles of legislation and morals, to which it had been indebted for its long prosperity and grandeur.

But be it remembered, that the best human laws will not be exempt from the imperfection inseparably bound up with all human things. Let us beware, however, of those innovators, who, instead of carefully improving, and vigorously executing those laws which are already established, adopt no remedies short of destruction; tolerate no improvements short of creation: who are carried away by a wild scheme of visionary perfection, which, if it could any where be found to exist, would not be likely to be found in the projects of men, who disdain to avail themselves of ancient experience, and progressive wisdom. Thucydides was a politician of another cast; for he declared, that even indifferent laws, vigilantly executed, were superior to the best that were not properly obeyed. Those modern reformists, who affect to be in raptures with the Greek republics, would do well to imitate the deliberation, the slowness, the doubt, with which the founder of the

Athenian legislation introduced his laws. Instead of those sudden and instantaneous constitutions we have witnessed, which, disdaining the slow growth of moral births, have started at once, full grown, from the brain of the projector, and were as suddenly superseded as rapidly produced, Solon would not suffer a single law to be determined on, and accepted, till the first charm of novelty was past, and the first heat of enthusiasm had cooled. What would the same capricious theorists say to that reverence with which the Egyptians, above cited, regarded antiquity, example, custom, law, prescription? This sage people considered every political novelty with a jealousy equal to the admiration with which it is regarded by the new school. Trial, proof, experience, was the slow criterion by which they ventured to decide on the excellence of any institution. While, to the licentious innovator, antiquity is ignorance, custom is tyranny, order is intolerance, laws are chains. But the end has corresponded with the beginning. Their "baseless fabrics" have fallen to pieces before they were well reared; and have exposed their superficial, but self-sufficient builders, to the just derision of mankind.

CHAP. VII.

GREECE.

When we contemplate Greece, and especially when we fix our eyes on Athens, our admiration is strongly, I had almost said, is irresistibly excited, in reflecting, that such a diminutive spot concentrated within itself whatever is great and eminent in almost every point of view; whatever confers distinction on the human intellect; whatever is calculated to inspire wonder, or communicate delight. Athens was the pure well-head of poetry:

> "Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
> Repairing, in their golden urns draw light."

It was the theatre of arms, the cradle of the arts, the school of philosophy, and the parent of eloquence.

To be regarded as the masters in learning, the oracle of taste, and the standard of politeness, to the whole civilised world, is a splendid distinction. But it is a pestilent mischief, when the very renown attending such brilliant advantages becomes the vehicle for carrying into other countries the depraved manners by which these pre-eminent advantages are accompanied. This was confessedly the case of Greece with respect to Rome.

Rome had conquered Greece by her arms; but whenever a subjugated country contributes, by her vices, to enslave the state which conquered her, she amply revenges herself.

But the perils of this contamination do not terminate with their immediate consequences. The ill effects of Grecian manners did not cease with the corruptions which they engendered at Rome. There is still a serious danger, lest, while the ardent and high-spirited young reader contemplates Greece only through the splendid medium of her heroes and her artists, her poets and her orators; while his imagination is fired with the glories of conquest, and captivated with the charms of literature, that he may lose sight of the disorders, the corruptions, and the crimes, by which Athens, the famous seat of arts and of letters, was dishonoured. May he not be tinctured (allowing for change of circumstances) with something of that spirit which inflamed Alexander, when, as he was passing the Hydaspes, he enthusiastically exclaimed, "O, Athenians! could you believe to what dangers I expose myself, for the sake of being celebrated by you!"

Many of the Athenian vices originated in the very nature of their constitution; in the very spirit of that turbulent democracy which Solon could not restrain, nor the ablest of his successors control. The great founder of their legislation felt the dangers inseparable from the democratic form of government, when he declared, "that he had not given them the best laws, but the best

which they were able to bear." In the very establishment of his institutions, he betrayed his distrust of this species of government, by those guards and ramparts which he was so assiduous in providing and multiplying. Knowing himself to be incapable of setting aside the popular power, his attention was directed to divest it, as much as possible, of its mischiefs, by the entrenchments that he strove to cast about it. His sagacious mind anticipated the ill effects of that republican restlessness, that at length completely overturned the state which it had so often menaced, and so constantly distracted.

This unsettled government, which left the country perpetually exposed to the tyranny of the few, and the turbulence of the many, was never bound together by any principle of union, by any bond of interest, common to the whole community, except when the general danger, for a time, annihilated the distinction of separate interests. The restraint of laws was feeble; the laws themselves were often contradictory; often ill administered; popular intrigues, and tumultuous assemblies, frequently obstructing their operation. The noblest services were not seldom rewarded with imprisonment, exile, or assassination. Under every change, confiscation and proscription were never at a stand; and the only way of effacing the impression of any revolution which had produced these outrages was to promote a new one, which engendered, in its turn, fresh outrages, and improved upon the antecedent disorders.

By this light and capricious people, acute in their feelings, carried away by every sudden gust of passion, as mutable in their opinions as unjust in their decisions, the most illustrious patriots were first sacrificed, and then honoured with statues; their heroes were murdered as traitors, and then reverenced as gods. This wanton abuse of authority, this rash injustice, and fruitless repentance, would be the inevitable consequence of lodging supreme power in the hands of a vain and variable populace, inconstant in their very vices, perpetually vibrating between irretrievable crimes and ineffectual regrets.

That powerful oratory, which is to us so just a subject of admiration, was, doubtless, no inconsiderable cause of the public disorders. And to that exquisite talent, which constitutes one of the chief boasts of Athens, we may look for one principal source of her disorders:

> " Those ancients, whose resistless eloquence
> Wielded at will the fierce Democracy,
> Shook th' arsenal, and fulmin'd over Greece,
> To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne."

When we consider what mighty influence this talent gave to the popular leaders, and what a powerful engine their demagogues possessed, to work upon the passions of the multitude, who composed their popular assemblies; when we reflect on the character of those crowds on whom this stirring eloquence was exercised, and remember that their opinion decided on the fate of the country: all this will contribute to account for the frequency and vio-

lence of the public commotions, and naturally explains why that rhetorical genius, which shed so bright a lustre on the country, was, from the nature of the constitution, frequently the instrument of convulsing it.

While the higher class, in many of the Greek republics, seemed, without scruple, to oppress their inferiors, the populace of Athens commonly exerted the same hostile spirit of resentment against their leaders. Competition, circumvention, litigation; every artifice of private fraud, every stratagem of personal injustice, filled up the short intervals of foreign wars and public contests. How strikingly is St. Paul's definition of that light and frivolous propensity of the Athenians, which led them to pass the day only "to hear or to tell some new thing," illustrated by Plutarch's relation of the illiterate citizen, who voted Aristides to the punishment of the Ostracism! When this great man questioned his accuser, whether Aristides had ever injured him, he replied, so far from it, that he did not even know him, only he was quite *wearied out* with hearing him every where called *the just.* Besides that spirit of envy which is peculiarly alive in democracies, to have heard this excellent person calumniated, would have been a refreshing novelty, and have enabled him "to tell a new thing."

That passionate fondness for scenic diversions, which led the Athenians not only to apply part of the public money to the support of the theatres, and to pay for the admission of the populace, but

also made it a capital crime to divert this fund to any other service, even to the service of the state, so sacred was this application of it deemed — was another concurrent cause of the profligacy of public manners. * The abuses to which this universal invitation to luxury and idleness led; the licentiousness of that purely democratic spirit, which made the lowest classes claim, as a right, to partake in the diversions of the highest; the pernicious productions of some of the comic poets; the unbounded license introduced by the mask; the voluptuousness of their music, whose extraordinary effects it would be impossible to believe, were they not confirmed by the general voice of antiquity; all these concurring circumstances induced a depravation of morals, of which less enlightened countries do not often present an example.

The profane and impure Aristophanes was almost adored, while the virtue of Socrates not

* Pericles not being rich enough to supplant his competitor by acts of liberality, procured this law with a view to make his court to the people. He scrupled not, in order to secure their attachment to his person and government, by thus "buying them with their own money," effectually to promote their natural levity and idleness, and to corrupt their morals. The rulers of a neighbouring nation have been too skilful adepts in the art of corruption, not to admire and eagerly adopt an example so suited to their political circumstances, and so congenial to their national frivolity. Accordingly, an unexampled multitude of theatres have been opened; and in order to allay the discontents of the lower class at the expense of their time and morals, the price of these diversions has been reduced so low as almost to emulate the gratuitous admission of the Athenian populace.

only procured him a violent death, but the poet, by making the philosopher contemptible to the populace, paved the way to his unjust sentence by the judges. Nay, perhaps the delight which the Athenians took in the impious and offensively loose wit of this dramatic poet, rendered them more deaf to the voice of that virtue which was taught by Plato, and of that liberty in which they had once gloried, and which Demosthenes continued to thunder in their unheeding ears. Their rage for sensual pleasure rendered them a fit object for the projects of Philip, and a ready prey to the attacks of Alexander.

In lamenting, however, the corruptions of the theatre in Athens, justice compels us to acknowledge, that her immortal tragic poets, by their chaste and manly compositions, furnish a noble exception. In no country has decency and purity, and, to the disgrace of Christian countries, let it be added, have morality and even piety, been so generally prevalent in any theatrical compositions, as in what

> —— "her lofty grave Tragedians taught
> In Chorus or Iambic, teachers best
> Of moral prudence."

Yet, in paying a just and warm tribute to the moral excellencies of these sublime dramatists, is not an answer provided to that long agitated question, Whether the stage can be indeed made a school of morals? No question had ever a fairer chance for decision than was here afforded. — If it be al-

lowed, that there never was a more profligate city than Athens; if it be equally indisputable that never country possessed more unexceptionable dramatic poets than Eschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; if the same city thus at once produced the best physicians, and the worst patients, what is the result? Do the Athenian annals record, that any class or condition of citizens were actually reformed by constantly frequenting, we had almost said, by constantly living in the theatre?

Plutarch, who severely condemns the Athenians, had too just a judgment to censure either the excellence of the poets, or the good taste of the people who admired them. But he blames them for that excessive passion for diversions, "which," says he, "by setting up a new object of attachment, had nearly extinguished public virtue, and made them more anxious about the fate of a play than about the fate of their country." *

Such were the manners which historians, orators, and poets have consigned to immortal fame! Such were the people for whom our highly educated youth are taught to feel an enthusiastic admiration! Such are the forms of government which have excited the envy, and partly furnished the model to the bloody innovators, and frantic politicians of our age! Madly to glory in the dream of liberty, and to be in fact the victim of changing tyrants, but unchanging tyranny. — This was the coveted lot of ancient Athens! This is the object

* See Wortley Montagu on the Rise and Fall of Ancient Republics.

of reverence, eulogy, and imitation to a large portion of modern Europe!

In reflecting on the splendid works of genius and of art in Athens, as opposed to the vices of her government, and the licentiousness of her morals, — will it be thought an adequate compensation for the corruptions of both, if we grant, as we are disposed to do in its fullest extent, that unparalleled combination of talents, which delighted and informed the rest of the world? If we allow that this elegance of taste spread so wide, and descended so low, that every individual of an Athenian mob might, as has been triumphantly asserted *, be a just critic of dramatic composition? That the ear of the populace was so nicely tuned, and so refined a judge of the delicacies of pronunciation, that an Attic herb-woman could detect the provincial accent of a learned philosopher? Is it even a sufficient compensation, equisite as we allow the gratification to have been, that the spectator might range among the statues of Lysippus, or the pictures of Apelles, or the critic enjoy the still more intellectual luxury of listening to an oration of Demosthenes, of a scene of Euripides, — while the rulers of so accomplished a people were in general dissolute, tyrannical, oppressive, and unjust; and the people themselves universally sunk into the most degraded state of manners; immersed in the last excess of effeminacy; debased by the most exces-

* See an elegant paper in the Adventurer, in which some of these triumphs of Athens are asserted.

sive sensuality, fraud, idleness, avarice, gaming, and debauchery?

If here and there the eye is relieved, and the feelings are refreshed, with the casual appearance of a Miltiades, a Cimon, an Aristides, a Socrates, a Phocion, or a Xenophon; yet these thinly scattered stars serve less to retrieve the Athenian character, by their solitary lustre, or even by their confluent radiance, than to overwhelm it with disgrace, by the atrocious injustice with which these bright luminaries were treated by their country. The eulogium of the citizen is the satire of the state.

While we observe that Greece first became powerful, rich, and great, through the energy of her people, and the vigour of her character, and that this very greatness, power, and riches, have a natural bias towards corruption; that while they happily tend to produce and nourish those arts, which in their just measure are the best embellishments of a nation; yet, carried to excess, and misaplied to vicious purposes, tend to weaken and corrupt it; that Athens, by her public and private vices, and by her very refinement in politeness, and her devotedness to the arts, not only precipitated her own ruin, — but by the transplantation of those arts, encumbered with those vices, ultimately contributed to ruin Rome also. — While we take this retrospect, we, of this highly favoured land, may receive an awful admonition; we may make a most instructive comparison of our own situation with respect to a

neighbouring nation — a nation which, under the rapidly-shifting form of every mode of government, from the despotism of absolute monarchy to a republican anarchy, to which the royal tyranny was comparative freedom; — and now again, in the closing scene of this changeful drama, to the heavy subjugation of military despotism, has never ceased to be the object of childish admiration, of passionate fondness, and servile imitation, to too many in our own country; to persons, too, whose rank, giving them the greatest stake in it, have most to risk by the assimilation with her manners, and most to lose by the adoption of her principles. And though, through the special providence and undeserved mercies of God, we have withstood the flood of revolutionary doctrines, let us, taking warning from the resemblance above pointed out, no longer persist, as in the halcyon days of peace, servilely to adopt her language, habits, manners, and corruptions. For now to fill up the measure of our danger, her pictures, and her statues, not the fruits of her own genius — for here the comparison with Athens fails — but the plunder of her usurpation, and the spoils of her injustice, by holding out new baits to our curiosity, and new attractions to our admiration, are in danger of fatally and finally accomplishing the resemblance. — May the omen be averted!

Among the numberless lessons which *we* may derive from the study of Grecian history, there is one which cannot be too often inculcated, more

especially as it is a fact little relished by many of our more refined wits and politicians, — we mean the error of ascribing to arts, to literature, and to politeness, that power of softening and correcting the human heart, which is, in truth, the exclusive prerogative of *religion*. Really to mend the heart, and purify the principle, is a deeper work than the most finished cultivation of the *taste* has ever been able to effect. The polished Athenians were among the most unjust of mankind in their national acts, and the most cruel towards their allies. They remarkably exemplify the tendency of *acting in a body*, to lessen each man's individual consciousness of guilt or cruelty. This polite people, in their political capacity, committed, without scruple, actions of almost unparalleled barbarity.

Every reflecting class of British, and especially of Christian readers, will not fail to peruse the annals of this admired republic with sentiments of deep gratitude to Heaven for the vast superiority of our own national, civil, social, moral, and religious blessings. And they may enrich the catalogue with that one additional advantage, which Xenophon thought was all that Athens wanted, and which we possess — *We are an island.* * The sound and sober politician will see most strongly illustrated, in the evils of the Athenian state (though dissimilar in some respects

* See Montesquieu, Esprit des Loix, vol. ii. p. 3.

from modern democracy), the blessings of our representative government, and of our deliverance from any approximation towards that mob-government to which universal suffrage would be the natural and necessary introduction.

The delicate and refined female of our favoured country will feel peculiar sensations of thankfulness, in comparing her happy lot with the degraded state of women in the politest ages of Greece. Condemned to ignorance, labour, and obscurity; excluded from rational intercourse; debarred from every species of intellectual improvement or innocent enjoyment; they never seem to have been the objects of respect or esteem; in the conjugal relation, the servile agent, not the endeared companion. Their depressed state was, in some measure, confirmed by illiberal legal institutions; and their native genius was systematically restrained from rising above one degraded level. — Such was the lot of the *virtuous* part of the sex. We forbear to oppose to this gloomy picture the profligate renown to which the bold pretensions of daring vice elevated mercenary beauty; nor would we glance at the impure topic, but to remind our amiable countrywomen, that immodesty in dress, contempt of the sober duties of domestic life, a boundless appetite for pleasure, and a misapplied devotion to the arts, were among the steps which led to this systematic profession of shameless profligacy, and to the establishment of those countenanced corruptions which raised

all other nations. It tends to diffuse a general sense of moral obligation, a continual reference to the claims of others, and our own consequent obligations: in short, a continual reference to the *real* rights of man; a term which, though so shamefully abused, and converted into the watch-word of riot and rebellion, yet, truly and properly understood, is of sound meaning and constant application. By princes, especially, these rights should ever be kept in remembrance. They were, indeed, never so well secured, as by that excellent injunction of our blessed Saviour, *To do to others as we would have them do to us.* And to which the Apostle's brief but comprehensive directions form an admirable commentary: *Honour all men — Love your brethren — Fear God — Honour the King.*

But to return to the Romans: their very patriotism, by leading them to thirst for universal empire, finally destroyed them, being no less fatal to the morals, than to the greatness of the state. Even their vaunted public spirit partly originated in the necessities of their situation. They were a little state, surrounded by a multitude of other little states, and they had no safety but in union. "Necessity first roused the genius of War, and the habits of experienced and successful valour kept him awake. The love of wealth and power, in latter ages, carried on what original bravery had begun; till, in the unavoidable vicissitude of human affairs, Rome perished beneath the weight

of that pile of glory which she had been so long rearing." *

Their laws and constitution were naturally calculated to promote their public spirit, and to produce their union. Having succeeded in repelling the attacks of the small rival powers, and, by their peculiar fortune, or rather by the designation of Providence, having become the predominating power in Italy, they proceeded to add conquest to conquest, making, in the pride of conscious superiority, wars evidently the most unjust. Yet it must not be denied, that the occupation which progressive conquests found for the citizens communicated a peculiar hardiness to the Roman character, and served to retard the growth both of luxury and faction. That public spirit, which might be justified when it applied itself to wars of self-defence, became by degrees little better than the principle of a band of robbers on a great scale; at the best, of honourable robbers, who, for the sake of the spoil, agree fairly to co-operate in order to obtain it, and divide it equally when it is obtained.

This public spirit seems to have existed so long as there were any objects of foreign ambition remaining, and so long as any sense was left of foreign danger. Even in the midst of unlawful and unrelenting war, it is important to bear in mind, that many of the ancient virtues were still assiduously cultivated; the laws were still had in reverence, and, in spite of a corrupt Polytheism,

* Carlo Denina on the ancient Republics of Italy.

and of many and great defects in the morality and the constitution of Rome, this was the salt which, for a time, preserved her. The firmness of character, and deep political sagacity of the Romans, seem to have borne an exact proportion to each other. That foreseeing wisdom, that penetrating policy, which led Montesquieu to observe, that they conquered the world by *maxims* and *principles*, seem, in reality, to have insured the success of their conquests, almost more than their high national valour, and their bold spirit of enterprise.

What was it which afterwards plunged Rome into the lowest depths of degradation, and finally blotted her out from among the nations? It was her renouncing those *maxims* and *principles*. It was her departure from every virtuous and self-denying habit. It was the gradual relaxation of private morals. It was the substitution of luxury for temperance, and of a mean and narrow selfishness for public spirit. It was a contempt for the sober manners of the ancient republic, and a dereliction of the old principles of government, even while the forms of that government were retained. It was the introduction of a new philosophy more favourable to sensuality; it was the importation, by her Asiatic proconsuls, of every luxury which could pamper that sensuality. It was, in short, the evils resulting from those two passions which monopolised their souls, the lust of power, and the lust of gold. These passions operated on each other, as cause and effect, action and re-action; and produced that rapid corruption which Sallust

describes with so much spirit. — *Mores majorum non paulatim ut antea, sed torrentis modo precipitati.* Profligacy, venality, peculation, oppression, succeeded to that simplicity, patriotism, and high-minded disinterestedness, on which this nation had once so much valued itself, and which had attracted the admiration of the world. So that Rome, in the days of her pristine severity of manners, and Rome in the last period of her freedom, exhibits a stronger contrast than will be found between almost any two countries.

This depravation does not refer to solitary instances, to the shamelessness of a Verres, or the profligacy of a Piso, but to the general practice of avowed corruption and systematic venality. By the just judgment of Providence, the enjoyment of the spoils brought home from the conquered nations corrupted the conquerors; and at length compelled Rome, in her turn, both to fly before her enemies, and to bow down her head under the most intolerable domestic yoke. Rome had no more the spirit to make any faint struggle for liberty after the death of Cæsar, than Greece after that of Alexander, though to each the occasion seemed to present itself. Neither state had virtue enough left to deserve, or even to desire, to be free. The wisdom of Cato should, in the case of Rome, have discovered this; and it should have spared him the fruitless attempt to restore liberty to a country which its vices had enslaved, and have preserved him, even on his own principles, from self-destruction.

the more celebrated, but infamous Athenian women

"To that bad eminence."

Every description of men, who know how to estimate public good, or private happiness, will joyfully acknowledge the visible effect which Christianity has had (independently of its influence over its real votaries) in improving and elevating the general standard of morals, so as considerably to rectify and raise the conduct of those who are not directly actuated by its principles. And, lastly, to say nothing of a pure church establishment, so diametrically the reverse of the deplorably blind and ignorant rites of Athenian worship *, — who can contemplate, without a thankful heart, that large infusion of Christianity into our national laws, which has set them so infinitely above all comparison with the admired codes of Lycurgus and of Solon?

* Acts of the Apostles, ch. xvii.

CHAP. VIII.

ROME.

If the Romans, from being a handful of banditti, rendered themselves in a short period lords of the universe; if Rome, from being an ordinary town in Italy, became foremost in genius and in arms, and at length unrivalled in imperial magnificence; let it be remembered that the foundations of this greatness were laid in some of the extraordinary virtues of that republic. The personal frugality of her citizens; the remarkable simplicity of their manners; the habit of transferring from themselves to the state all pretensions to external consequence and splendour; the strictness of her laws, and the striking impartiality of their execution; that inflexible regard to justice, which led them, in the early ages of the republic — so little was the doctrine of *expediency* in repute among *them* — to inflict penalties on those citizens who even conquered by deceit, and not by valour; that vigilant attention to private morals which the establishment of a censorship secured, and that zeal for liberty, which was at the same time supported by her political constitution. These causes were the true origin of the Roman greatness. This was the pedestal on which her colossal

power was erected; and though she remained mistress of the world, even at a time when these virtues had begun to decline, the first impulse not having ceased to operate, yet a discerning eye might even then perceive her growing internal weakness, and might anticipate her final dissolution.

Republican Rome, however, has been much too highly panegyrised. The Romans had, indeed, a public feeling, to which every kind of private affection gave way; and it is chiefly on the credit of their sacrificing their individual interests to the national cause, that they acquired so high a renown.

It may not be unworthy of remark, that the grand fundamental principle of the ancient republics (and though it was still more strikingly manifest in the Grecian, it was in no small degree the case with Republican Rome,) was different from that which constitutes the essential principle of the British constitution, and even opposite to it. In the former, the *public* was every thing; the rights, the comforts, the very existence of *individuals*, were as nothing. With *us*, happily, the case is very different, nay, even exactly the reverse. The well-being of the whole community is provided for, by effectually securing the rights, the safety, the comforts of every individual. Among the ancients, the grossest acts of injustice against private persons were continually perpetrated, and were regarded as beneath account, when they stood in the way of the will, the interest, the

aggrandisement, the glory of the state. In *our* happier country, not the meanest subject can be injured in his person or his possessions. The little stock of the artisan, the peaceful cottage of of the peasant, is secured to him by the universal superintendence, and the strong protection of the public force. The state is justly considered as made up of an aggregate of particular families; and it is by securing the well-being of each, that all are preserved in prosperity. We could delight to descant largely on this topic; and surely the contemplation could not but warm the hearts of Britons with lively gratitude to the Author of all their blessings, and with zealous attachment to that constitution which conveys and secures to them the enjoyment of such unequalled happiness? But we dare not expatiate in so wide a field. Let us, however, remark the degree in which the benevolent spirit of Christianity is transfused into our political system. As it was the glory of our religion to take the poor under her instruction, and to administer her consolations to the wretched, so it is the beauty of our constitution that she considers not as below her care, the seats of humble but honest industry; the peaceful dwellings, and quiet enjoyments, of the lover of domestic comfort.

Again — This vital spirit of our constitution is favourable to virtue, as well as congenial with religion, and conducive to happiness. It checks that spirit of injustice and oppression which is so manifest in the conduct of the ancient republics towards

Among the causes of the political servitude of Rome may be reckoned, in a considerable degree, the institution of the Pretorian bands, who, in a great measure, governed both the Romans and the emperors. These Pretorian bands presented the chief difficulty in the way of good emperors; some of whom they destroyed for attempting to reform them; and of the bad emperors they were the electors.

In perusing the Roman history, these, and other causes of the decline and fall of the empire, should be carefully shown; the tendency of private vices to produce factions, and the tendency of factions to overthrow liberty; a spirit of dissension, and a rapid deterioration of morals, being, in all states, the most deadly, and, indeed, the inseparable symptoms of expiring freedom. The no less baneful influence of arbitrary power, in the case of the many profligate and cruel emperors who succeeded, should be clearly pointed out.

It is also a salutary lesson on the hunger of conquest, and the vanity of ambition, to trace the Roman power, by its vast accession of territory, losing in solidity what it gained in expansion; furnishing a lasting example to future empires, who trust too much for the stability of their greatness to the deceitful splendour of remote acquisition, and the precarious support of distant colonial attachment.

Above all, the fall of Rome may be attributed, in no small degree, to the progress, and, gradually, to the prevalence of the Epicurean philosophy, and

to its effect in taking away that reverence for the gods, which alone could preserve that deep sense of the sanctity of oaths for which Rome, in her better days, had been so distinguished. She had originally established her political system on this fear of the gods; and the people continued, as appears from Livy, to practise the duties of their religion * (such as it was) more scrupulously than any other ancient nation. The most amiable of the Roman patriots attributes the antecedent success and grandeur of his country to their conviction "that all events are directed by a Divine power †;" and Polybius, speaking merely as a politician, accuses some, in his age, of rashness and absurdity, for endeavouring to extirpate the fear of the gods; declaring, that what others held to be an object of disgrace, he believed to be the very thing by which the republic was sustained. He illustrates his position by adducing the conduct of the two great states, one of which, from its adoption of the doctrines of Epicurus, had no sense of religion left, and, consequently, no reverence for the solemnities of an oath, which the other retained in its full force. "If, among the Greeks," says he, "a single talent only be intrusted to those who have the management of any of the public money, though they give ten written sureties, with as many seals, and twice as many witnesses, they are *unable* to discharge the trust reposed in them with

* Nulla unquam respublica sanctior, nec bonis exemplis ditior fuit.

† See Montagu on the Rise and Fall of Ancient Republics.

integrity, — while the Romans, who, in their magistracies and embassies, disburse the greatest sums, are prevailed on, by *the single obligation of an oath*, to perform their duty with inviolable honesty." *

In her subsequent total dereliction of this integrity, what a lesson does Rome hold out to *us*, to be careful not to lose the influences of a purer religion! To guard, especially, against the fatal effects of a needless multiplication of oaths, and the light mode in which they are too frequently administered! The citizens of Rome, in the days of the younger Cato, had no resource left against this pressing evil, because it was in vain to inculcate a reverence for *their* gods, and to revive the influence of *their* religion. But, if even the belief of false gods had the power of conveying political and moral benefits, which the dark system of Atheism annihilated, how earnestly should WE endeavour to renovate and diffuse the ancient deference for the true religion, by teaching systematically and seriously to our youth, the divine principles of that Christianity which, in better times, was the honourable practice of our forefathers, and which alone can restore a due veneration for the solemnity of oaths. †

* Hampton's Polybius, vol. ii. book 6. on the Excellencies of the Roman Government.

† The admirable Hooker observes, that even the falsest religions were mixed with some truths, which had "very notable effects." Speaking of the dread of perjury in the ancient Romans, he adds, "It was their hurt untruly to

attribute so great power to false gods, as that they were able to prosecute, with fearful tokens of divine revenge, the wilful violation of oaths and execrable blasphemies, offered by deriders of religion even unto those false gods. Yet the right belief which they had that to perjury vengeance is due, was not without good effect, as touching the course of their lives who feared the wilful violation of oaths."—*Ecclesiastical Polity.*

CHAP. IX.

CHARACTERS OF HISTORIANS, WHO WERE CONCERNED IN THE TRANSACTIONS WHICH THEY RECORD.

OF the modern writers of ancient history, the young reader will find that Rollin * has, in one respect, the decided superiority; we mean, in his practice of intermixing useful reflections on events and characters. But we should strongly recommend the perusal of such portions of the original ancient historians as a judicious preceptor would select. And, in reading historians, or politicians, ancient or modern, the most likely way to escape theories and fables is to study those writers who were themselves actors in the scenes which they record.

Among the principal of these is — THUCYDIDES, whose opportunities of obtaining information, whose diligence in collecting it, and whose judgment and fidelity in recording it, have obtained for him the general suffrage of the best judges; who had a considerable share in many of the events which he records, having been an unfortunate, though meritorious, commander in the Peloponnesian war, of which he is the incompar-

* The writer forbears to name living authors.

able historian; — whose chronological accuracy is derived from his early custom of preparing materials as the events arose; and whose genius confers as much honour; as his unmerited exile reflects disgrace, on his native Athens. In popular governments, and in none perhaps so much as in those of Greece, the ill effects of mismanagement at home have been too frequently charged on those who have had the conduct of armies abroad; and where a sacrifice must be made, that of the absent is always the most easy. The integrity and patriotism of Thucydides, however, were proof against the ingratitude of the republic. His work was as impartial as if Athens had been just; like Clarendon, he devoted the period of his banishment to the composition of a history, which was the glory of the country that banished him. — A model of candour, he wrote not for a party or a people, but for the world; not for the applause of his age, but the instruction of posterity. And though his energy, spirit, and variety must interest all readers of taste, statesmen will best know his value, and politicians will look up to him as a master. — XENOPHON, the Attic bee, equally admirable in whatever point of view he is considered; a consummate general, historian, and philosopher; who carried on the historic series of the Greek revolutions from the period at which Thucydides discontinued it; like him, was driven into banishment from that country, of which he was so bright an ornament, —

"And with his exil'd hours enrich'd the world!"

The conductor and narrator of a retreat more honourable and more celebrated than the victories of other leaders; a writer, who is considered by the first Roman critic as the most exquisite model of simplicity and elegance; and who, in almost all the transactions which he relates, *magna pars fuit*. — POLYBIUS, trained to be a statesman in the Achæan league, and a warrior at the conquest of Carthage; the friend of Scipio, and the follower of Fabius; and who is said to be more experimentally acquainted with the wars and politics of which he treats than any other Greek. He is, however, more authentic than entertaining; and the votaries of certain modern historians, who are satisfied with an epigram instead of a fact, who like turns of wit better than sound political reflections, and prefer an antithesis to truth, will not justly appreciate the merit of Polybius, whose love of authenticity induced him to make several voyages to the places of which his subjects led him to speak. — CÆSAR, of whom it would be difficult to say, whether he planned his battles with more skill, fought them with more valour, or described them with more ability; or whether his sword or pen executed his purposes with more celerity and effect; but who will be less interesting to the general reader than to the statesman and soldier. His Commentaries, indeed, will be perused with less advantage by the hereditary successor of the sovereign of a settled constitution than by those who are struggling with the evils of civil commotion. — JOINVILLE, whose life of his

his great master, Saint Louis, is written with the spirit of the ancient nobles, and the vivid earnestness of one who saw with interest what he describes with fidelity; having been companion to the King in the expeditions which he records. — PHILIPPE DE COMINES, who possessed, by his personal concern in public affairs, all the avenues to the political and historical knowledge of his time, and whose memoirs will be admired while acute penetration, sound sense, and solid judgment survive. — DAVILA, who learned the art of war under that great master, Henry the Fourth of France, and whose history of the civil wars of that country furnishes a variety of valuable matter; who possesses the happy talent of giving interest to details, which would be dry in other hands; who brings before the eyes of the reader every place which he describes, and every scene in which he was engaged; while his intimate knowledge of business, and of human nature, enables him to unveil with address the mysteries of negotiation, and the subtilties of statemen. This excellent work is disgraced by the most disgusting panegyrics on the execrable Catherine di Medici, an offence against truth and virtue, too glaring to be atoned for by any sense of personal obligation. In consequence of this partiality, he speaks of the massacre of Saint Bartholomew as slightly as if it had been a merely common act of necessary rigour on a few criminals; an *execution* being the cool term by which he describes that tremendous

deed.* — GUICCIARDIN, a diplomatic historian, a lawyer, and a patriot; whose tedious orations and florid style cannot destroy the merit of his great work, the value of which is enhanced by the piety and probity of his own mind. — SULLY, the intrepid warrior, the able financier, the uncorrupt minister, who generally regulated the deep designs of the consummate statesman, by the inflexible rules of religion and justice; whose memoirs should be read by ministers, to instruct them how to serve kings; and by kings, to teach them how to choose ministers. — CARDINAL DE RETZ, who delineates with accuracy and spirit the principal actors in the wars of the Fronde, in which he himself had been a chief agent; who develops the dissimulation of courts with the skilfulness of an adept in the arts which he unfolds, yet affecting, while he portrays the artifices of others, a simplicity, the very reverse of his real character; while his levity in writing retains so much of the licentiousness, and want of moral and religious principle of his former life, that he cannot be safely recommended to those whose principles of judgment and conduct are not fixed. Yet, his characters of the two famous cardinal prime ministers may be read with advantage by those whose business leads them to such studies. The reader of De Retz will find frequent occasion to recognise the homage which even impiety and

* Who can help regretting that the lustre of one of the most elegant works of antiquity, Quintilian's Institution of an Orator, should be in a similar manner tarnished by the most preposterous panegyrics on the Emperor Domitian?

vice pay to religion and virtue, while the abundant corruptions of Popery will call forth from every considerate Protestant devout sensations of gratitude to Heaven, for having delivered us from the tyranny of a system, so favourable to the production of the rankest abuses in the church, and the grossest superstition in the people. — TEMPLE, the zealous negotiator of the triple alliance, and worthy, by his spirit and candour, to be the associate of De Witt in that great business which was transacted between them, with the liberal spirit, and honourable confidence of private friendship. His writings give the clearest insight into the period and events of which he treats; and his easy, though careless style, and well-bred manner, would come, almost more than any other, under the description of what may be called the *genteel*, did not his vanity a little break the charm. None, however, except his political writings, are meant to be recommended; his religious opinions being highly exceptionable and absurd. Yet it is but justice to add, that his unambitious temper, his fondness for private life, his enjoyment of its peace, and his taste for its pleasures, render his character interesting and amiable. — The manners-painting CLARENDON, the able chancellor, the exemplary minister, the inflexible patriot, who stemmed, almost singly, the torrent of vice, corruption, and venality; and who was not ashamed of being religious in a court which was ashamed of nothing else; whom the cabal hated for his integrity, and the court for his purity; a stateman who might

have had statues erected to him in any other period but that in which he lived; would have reformed most other governments but that to which he belonged, and been supported by almost any king but him whom he had the misfortune to serve. Clarendon, the faithful biographer of his own life; the majestic and dignified historian of the grand rebellion; whose periods sometimes want beauty, but never sense, though that sense is often wrapped up in an involution and perplexity which a little obscure it; whose style is weighty and significant, though somewhat retarded by the stateliness of its march, and somewhat encumbered with a redundancy of words. — Torcy, whose memoirs, though they may be thought to bear rather hard on the famous plenipotentiaries with whom he negotiated, and on the haughtiness of the allies who employed them, are written with much good sense, modesty, and temper. They present a striking reverse in the fortune of the imperious disturber of Europe, "fallen from his high estate." He who had been used to give his orders from the banks of the Po, the Danube, and the Tagus, is seen reduced to supplicate for peace, and to exchange the insolence of triumph for the hope of existence. Two Dutch burgomasters, haughtily imposing their own terms on a monarch who had before filled France with admiration, and Europe with alarm. This reverse must impress the mind of the reader, as it does that of the writer, with an affecting sense of

that controlling Providence, which thus derides the madness of ambition, and the folly of worldly wisdom; that Providence which, in maintaining its character of being the abaser of the proud, produces, by means, at first sight the most opposite, the accomplishment of its own purposes; and renders the unprincipled lust of dominion the instrument of its own humiliation. The difficulties of a negotiator, who has to conclude an inglorious though indispensable treaty, are feelingly described, as well as the too natural, though hard fate of a minister, who is driven to such an unfortunate measure as that of being considered as the instrument of dishonour to his country. His pious recognition of God, as the supreme disposer of events, is worthy of great praise. — The copious and fluent BURNET, whose diffuse, but interesting *History of his Own Times*, informs and pleases; though the loose texture of his slovenly narration would not now be tolerated in a newspaper; who saw a great deal, and wishes to have it thought that he saw every thing; whose egotism we forgive for the sake of his frankness, and whose minuteness for the sake of his accuracy; who, if ever he exceeds, it is always on the side of liberty and toleration; an excess safe enough when the writer is soundly loyal, and unquestionably pious; and more especially safe when the reader is a prince. — LADY RUSSELL, worthy of being the daughter of the virtuous Southampton; too fatally connected with the unhappy politics of the times;

whose life was a practical illustration of her faith in the Divine support, and of submission to the Divine will; and whose letters, by their sound and sober piety, strong sense, and useful information, eclipse all those of her learned and distinguished correspondents.

CHAP. X.

REFLECTIONS ON HISTORY. — ANCIENT HISTORIANS.

If, however, the historian be a compatriot, and especially if he be a contemporary, even though he was no actor in the drama, it is difficult for him not to range himself, too uniformly, on one side or the other. The human mind has a strong natural bias to adopt exclusive attachments. Perhaps man may be defined to be *an animal that delights in party.* Yet we are inclined to believe that an historian, though he may be partial and interested, yet, if he be keen-sighted and intelligent as to the facts of which he speaks, is, on the whole, a better witness than a more fair and candid, but worse-informed man; because we may more easily calculate the degree of allowance to be made for partiality and prejudice, than we can estimate that which is to be made for defect of information. Of two evils, therefore, we should prefer a prejudiced but well-informed, to a more impartial but less enlightened narrator.

When materials are fresh, they are more likely to be authentic; but, unfortunately, when it is more easy to obtain, it is often less safe to employ them. When the events are more remote, their

authenticity is more difficult to ascertain; and when they are near, the passions which they excite are more apt to warp the truth. Thus what might be gained in accuracy by nearness of position, is liable to be lost in the partiality which that very position induces. The true point of vision is attained, when the eye and the object are placed at their due distance. The reader who comes to the perusal of the work in a more unimpassioned frame than, perhaps, the author wrote, will best collect the characters from the narrative, if fairly given.

Care should be taken not to extol shining characters in the gross, but to point out their weaknesses and errors; nor should the brilliant qualities of illustrious men be suffered to cast a veil over their vices, or so to fascinate the young reader, as to excite admiration of their very faults. Even in perusing *sacred history*, we should never extenuate, much less justify, the errors of great characters, but make them at once a ground for establishing the doctrine of general corruption, and for quickening our own vigilance. The weaknesses of the wisest, and the errors of the best, while they should be regarded with candour, must not be held up to imitation. It has been reasonably conjectured, that many acts of cruelty in Alexander, whose disposition was naturally merciful, were not a little owing to one of his preceptors having been early accustomed to call himself Phœnix, and his pupil Achilles; and thus to have

habitually trained him to an imitation even of the vices of this ferocious hero.

A prince must not study history merely to store his memory with amusing narratives or insulated events, but with a view to trace the dependence of one event upon another. A common reader will be satisfied with knowing the exploits of Scipio or Hannibal, and will be sufficiently entertained with the description of the riches or beauty of such renowned cities as Carthage or Rome; but a prince (who is also a politician) studies history in order to observe how ambition, operating on the breasts of two rival states, led to one war after another between these two states. By what steps the ruin of the one, and the triumph of the other, were hastened or delayed; by what indications the final catastrophe might have been antecedently known, or by what measures it might have been averted. He is interested not merely when a signal event arises, but by the whole skill of the game, and he is, on this account, anxious to possess many inferior circumstances, serving to unite one event with another, which, to the ordinary reader, appear insignificant and dull. Again, in the case of Pompey and Cæsar, the reflecting politician connects the triumphs of the latter with the political and moral state of Rome. He bears in mind the luxurious habits of the Patricians, who became the officers in Pompey's army; the gradual decay of public spirit, the licentiousness and venality of the capital, and the arts by which Cæsar had prepared his troops, while they were in Gaul, for the

contention which he already meditated for the empire of the world. He will, in idea, see that world already vanquished, when he considers the profound policy of this conqueror, who, on being appointed to the government of Gaul on both sides the Alps, by exciting the Gauls to solicit the same privileges with the Italians, opened to himself this double advantage; — the disturbance which this would occasion in Rome would lift him into absolute power; while, by his kindness and protection to these people, he gained an accession of strength to overthrow his competitors. The ordinary reader is satisfied with the battle of Pharsalia, for the entertainment it affords, and admires the splendour of the triumphs, without considering these things as links that connect the events which are past with those which are to come.

The preceptor of the royal pupil will, probably, think it advisable to select for her perusal some of the Lives of Plutarch. This author teaches two things excellently, antiquity and human nature. He would deserve admiration, were it only for that magazine of wisdom, condensed in the excellent sayings of so many great men, which he has recorded. Perhaps, all the historians together have not transmitted to us so many of the sage axioms and *bon mots* of ancient Greece and Rome. Yet in his parallels — if that can be called a parallel which brings together two men who have commonly little or no resemblance — even the upright Plutarch exhibits something too much of

the partiality lately noticed; the scale, whenever he weighs one of his own countrymen against a Roman, almost invariably inclining to the Greek side.

It may also be deemed useful to read to her a a few select portions of Suetonius. Though he is an author utterly unfit to be put into youthful, and especially into female hands, yet a judicious instructor may select passages particularly appropriated to a royal pupil. In truth, the writings of the ancient authors of all classes, historians, satirists, poets, and even moralists, are liable to the same objection, whether it be Suetonius, or Plutarch, or Juvenal, or even the comparatively decorous Virgil, that we take in hand; the perusal cannot fail to suggest to every considerate, and especially to every female reader, the obligations which we owe to Christianity, independently of its higher ends, for having so raised the standard of morals and of manners as to have rendered almost too monstrous for belief, and too shocking for relation in our days, the familiar and uncensured incidents of ancient times. Suetonius paints with uncommon force, though too often with offensive grossness, the crimes of the emperors, with their subsequent miseries and punishments. Tyrants will always detest history, and, of all historians, they will detest Suetonius.

An authentic historian of a deceased tyrant must not, however, be confounded with the malevolent declaimer against royalty. But though the most arbitrary prince cannot prevent his own posthu-

mous disgrace, yet an honest and conscientious historian will remember, that while he is detailing the *vices* of a king, which it is his duty to enumerate, it is his duty, also, carefully to avoid bringing the *office* of the king into contempt. And, while he is exposing the individual *crime*, he should never lose sight of his respect for the *authority* and *station* of him whose actions truth compels him to record in their real characters. The contrary insidious practice has of late so much prevailed, that the young reader should be put on his guard not to suffer his principles to be undermined by the affectation of indignant virtue, mock-patriotism, zeal for spurious liberty, and factitious morality. It is but justice to Mr. Hume, against whose principles we have thought it a duty to bear our most decided testimony *, to allow that, in the earlier periods of English history he carefully abstains from the vulgar error of always ascribing the public calamity, which he is relating, to the ambition or injustice of kings; but often attributes it, where it is often more justly due, to the insolence and oppression of the barons, or the turbulence and insubordination of the people. If he errs, it is on the contrary side.

But let those licentious anarchists, who delight to retail insipid jests or to publish unqualified libels on kings *as* kings, cast their eyes on an uninterrupted succession of five illustrious Roman emperors, who, though not exempt from faults,

* In Chap. XI.

some of them from vices, chiefly attributable to Paganism, yet exhibit such an unbroken continuity of great talents, and great qualities, as it would, perhaps, be difficult to find in any private family for five successive generations.

The candour of our excellent Queen Mary *, towards the biographers of princes, was exemplary. When, with an intention probably to soothe the royal ear, some persons in her presence severely condemned certain historians who had made reflections dishonourable to the memory of princes, she observed, that if the princes had given just ground for censure, the authors had done well to represent them fairly; and that other sovereigns must expect to be dealt with in the same manner, if they gave the same cause. She had even the magnanimity to wish, that all such princes would read Procopius (an author too much addicted to blacken the memory of kings), "because," she observed, "however he might have exaggerated the vices he described, it would be a salutary lesson to future princes, that they themselves must expect the same treatment, when all restraint was taken off, and the dread of their power terminated with their lives."

The late king of Prussia, who united the character of an author to that of a warrior, was of another way of thinking. He was of opinion, that the names of *good* princes alone should be recorded in history; and that those of the wicked

* In Chap. VIII.

should be suffered to perish with their crimes.* Were this practice to be universally adopted, might we not presume to question whether even the illustrious name of *Frederic the Great* would be as certain, as it is at present, of being carried down to posterity?

Tacitus is the historian of philosophers, and the oracle of politicians. Highly valuable for his deep and acute reflections, in which neither the governors nor governed are spared, he is an original and profound thinker, and is admirable for the plenitude of his images, and the paucity of his words. His style is ardent, and his figures are bold. Vigour, brevity, and point, are its characteristics. He throws out a stronger likeness of a flagitious Roman in three words than a diffuse writer would give in as many pages. In his Annals he is a faithful, occasionally, indeed, a too faithful narrator; but he is also, at the same time, an honest and indignant reprover of the atrocious deeds which he records. In a man passionately loving liberty, virtue, and his country, we pardon, while painting the ruin of each, those dark and sullen shades with which he sometimes overcharges the picture. Had he delineated happier times, his

* *Examen du Prince de Machiavel, by the King of Prussia.* It is curious to compare this composition of the King with his own conduct; to contrast his strong reprobation of the baneful glory of heroes; his horror of conquest and of the cruel passions which oppress mankind; his professed admiration of clemency, meekness, justice, and compassion, with which this work abounds — with the actual exploits of the ravager of the fertile plains of Saxony!! &c. &c.

tints would probably have been of a lighter cast. If he ever deceives, he does not, at least, ever appear to intend it; for he gives rumours as rumours, and his facts he generally grounds on the concurrent testimony of the times of which he writes. If, however, Tacitus fulfils one of the two duties which he himself prescribes to historians, that of writing without *fear*, he does not uniformly accomplish the other, that of writing without *hatred*; at least, neither his veracity nor his candour extended to his remarks on the Jews or Christians.

But with all his diffuseness, Livy is the writer who assists in forming the taste. With all his warmth, there is a beautiful sobriety in his narrations: he does not magnify the action: he relates it, and pours forth, from a full urn, a copious and continued stream of varied elegance. He directs the judgment, by passing over slight things in a slight manner, and dwelling only on the prominent parts of his subject, though he has been accused of some important omissions. He keeps the attention always alive, by exhibiting passions as well as actions; and what best indicates the hand of a master, we hang suspended on the event of his narrative, as if it were a fiction, of which the catastrophe is in the power of the writer, rather than a real history, with whose termination we are already acquainted. He is admirable no less for his humanity than his patriotism; and he is one of the few historians, who have marked the broad line of discrimination between true and false glory,

not erecting pomps, triumphs, and victories, into essentials of real greatness. He teaches patience under censure, inculcates a contempt of vulgar acclamation, and of all praise which is not fairly earned. One valuable superiority which Livy possesses over his competitors, is, that in describing vice, and vicious characters, he scrupulously contrives to excite an abhorrence of both; and his relations never leave on the mind of the reader a propensity to the crime, or a partiality for the criminal whom he has been describing. A defect in this acuteness of moral feeling has been highly pernicious to the youthful reader; and this too common admixture of impure description, even when the honest design has been to expose vice, has sensibly tainted the wholesomeness of historic composition.

Independently of those beautiful, though sometimes redundant speeches, which Livy puts into the mouths of his heroes, his eloquent and finished answers to ambassadors furnish a species of rhetoric peculiarly applicable to a royal education.

It has been regretted by some of the critics, that Livy, after enriching his own work by the most copious plagiarisms from his great precursor, Polybius, commends him, in a way so frigid, as almost to amount to censure. He does not, it is true, go the length of Voltaire in his treatment of Shakspeare, who first pillages and then abuses him. The Frenchman, indeed, who spoils what he steals, acts upon the old known principle of his

country highwaymen, who always murder where they rob.

If it be thought that we have too warmly recommended Heathen authors, let it be remembered, that in the hands of every enlightened preceptor, as was eminently the case with Fenelon, Pagans almost become Christian teachers by the manner in which they will be explained, elucidated, purified; and not only will the corruptions of Paganism be converted into instruction, by being contrasted with the opposite Christian graces, but the Christian system will be advantageously shown to be almost equally at variance with many Pagan virtues, as with all its vices.

If there were no other evidence of the value of Pagan historians, the profound attention which they prove the ancients to have paid to the education of youth would alone suffice to give them considerable weight in the eyes of every judge of sound institution. Their regard to youthful modesty, the inculcation of obedience and reserve, the exercises of self-denial, exacted from children of the highest rank, put to shame, — I will not say Christians, but many of the nominal professors of Christianity. Levity, idleness, disregard of the laws, contempt of established systems and national institutions, met with a severer reprobation in the Pagan youth, than is always found among those, in our day, who yet do not openly renounce the character of Christians.

Far be it from us, however, to take our morals from so miserably defective a standard as Pagan

history affords. [For though philosophy had given some admirable rules for maintaing the out-works of virtue, Christianity is the only religion which ever pretended to expel vice from the heart. The best qualities of Paganism want the best motives.] Some of the overgrown Roman virtues, also, though they would have been valuable in their just measure and degree, and in a due symmetry and proportion with other virtues, yet, by their excess, helped to produce those evils which afterwards ruined Rome; while a perfect system of morals, like the Christian, would have prevented those evils. Their patriotism was oppression to the rest of the world. Their virtue was not so much sullied by pride as founded in it; and their justice was tinctured with a savageness which bears little resemblance to the justice which is taught by Christianity.

These two simple precepts of our religion, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself;* — these two principles, kept in due exercise, would, like the two powers which govern the natural world, keep the intellectual and spiritual world in order; would restrain, impel, unite, and govern it.

In considering the ancient philosophy, *how does the fine gold become dim*, before the sober lustre of that divine Legislator, whose kingdom, indeed, was not of this world, but who has taught "kings of the earth, princes, and all people," those maxims and principles which cast into shade all the false splendours "of the antique world!" Chris-

tianity has furnished the only true practical comment on that grand position of the admirable author of the sublime, that *nothing is great the contempt of which is great.* For how can triumphs, honours, riches, power, conquest, fame, be considered as of intrinsic value by a Christian, the very *essence* of whose religion consists in being crucified to the world; the very *aim and end* of whose religion lies in a superiority to all greatness which is to have an end with this life; the very *nature* and *genius* of whose religion tends to prove, that eternal life is the only adequate measure of the happiness, and immortal glory the only adequate object of the ambition of a Christian!

CHAP. XI.

ENGLISH HISTORY. — MR. HUME.

But the royal pupil is not to wander always in the wide field of universal history. The extent is so vast, and the time for travelling over it so short, that after being sufficiently possessed of that general view of mankind which the history of the world exhibits, it seems reasonable to concentrate her studies, and to direct her attention to certain great leading points, and especially to those objects with which she has a natural and more immediate connection. The history of modern Europe abounds with such objects. In Robertson's luminous view of the state of Europe, the progress of society is traced with just arrangement and philosophical precision. His admirable histories of Charles V. and of Mary Queen of Scots, separate from their great independent merit, will be read with singular advantage in connection with the contemporary reigns of English history. In the writings of Sully and Clarendon may be seen how, for a long time, the passions of kings were contradicted, and often controlled by the wisdom of their ministers: sovereigns who were not insensible to praise, nor averse from flattery, yet submitting, though sometimes with a very ill grace,

to receive services rather than adulation. Ministers who consulted the good rather than the humour of their princes; who promoted their interests, instead of gratifying their vices, and who preferred their fame to their favour.

Mr. Hume.

Hume is incomparably the most informing, as well as the most elegant of all the writers of English history. His narrative is full, well arranged, and beautifully perspicuous. Yet, he is an author who must be read with extreme caution on a political, but especially on a religious account. Though, on occasions where he may be trusted, because his peculiar principles do not interfere, his political reflections are usually just, sometimes profound. His account of the origin of the Gothic government is full of interest and information. He marks with exact precision the progress and decay of the feudal manners, when law and order began to prevail, and our constitution assumed something like a shape. His finely painted characters of Alfred and Elizabeth should be engraved on the heart of every sovereign. His political prejudices do not strikingly appear till the establishment of the house of Stuart, nor his religious antipathies till about the distant dawn of the Reformation under Henry V. From that period to its full establishment he is perhaps more dangerous, because less ostensibly daring than some other infidel historians. It is a serpent under a bed of roses. He does not (in his *History* at least)

so much ridicule religion himself, as invite others to ridicule it. There is in his manner a sedateness which imposes; in his scepticism, a sly gravity, which puts the reader more off his guard than the vehemence of censure, or the levity of wit; for we are always less disposed to suspect a man who is too wise to appear angry. That same wisdom makes him too correct to *invent* calumnies, but it does not preserve him from doing what is scarcely less disingenuous. He implicitly adopts the injurious relations of those annalists who were most hostile to the reformed faith; though he must have known their accounts to be aggravated and discoloured, if not absolutely invented. He thus makes others responsible for the worst things he asserts, and spreads the mischief, without avowing the malignity. When he speaks from himself, the sneer is so cool, the irony so sober, the contempt so discreet, the moderation so insidious, the difference between Popish bigotry and Protestant firmness, between the fury of the persecutor and the resolution of the martyr, so little marked; the distinctions between intolerant frenzy and heroic zeal so melted into each other, and though he contrives to make the reader feel some indignation at the tyrant, he never leads him to feel any reverence for the sufferer; he ascribes such a slender superiority to one religious system above another, that the young reader who does not come to the perusal with his principles formed, will be in danger of thinking that the Reformation was really not worth contending for.

But, in nothing is the skill of this accomplished sophist more apparent than in the artful way in which he piques his readers into a conformity with his own views concerning religion. Human pride, he knew, naturally likes to range itself on the side of ability. He, therefore, skilfully works on this passion, by treating, with a sort of contemptuous superiority, as weak and credulous men, all whom he represents as being under the religious delusion; and by uniformly insinuating that talents and piety belong to opposite parties.

To the shameful practice of confounding fanaticism with real religion, he adds the disingenuous habit of accounting for the best actions of the best men, by referring them to some low motive; and affects to confound the designs of the religious and the corrupt, so artfully, that no radical difference appears to subsist between them.

It is injurious to a young mind to read the history of the Reformation by any author, how accurate soever he may be in his facts, who does not see a divine power accompanying this great work; by any author who ascribes to the power, or rather to the perverseness of nature, and the obstinacy of innovation, what was in reality an effect of providential direction; by any who discerns nothing but human resources, or stubborn perseverance, where a Christian distinguishes, though with a considerable alloy of human imperfection, the operation of the Spirit of God.

Hume has a fascinating manner at the close of the life of a hero, a prince, or a statesman, of

drawing up his character so elaborately as to attract and fix the whole attention of the reader; and he does it in such a way, that while he engages the mind, he unsuspectedly misleads it. He makes a general statement of the vices and virtues, the good and bad actions of the person whom he paints, leaving the reader to form his own conclusions, by casting up the balance of the vices and virtues, of the good and bad actions thus enumerated: while he never once leads the reader to determine on the character by the only sure criterion, the *ruling principle*, which seemed to govern it. — This is the too prevailing method of historians: they make morals completely independent of religion by thus weighing qualities, and letting the preponderance of the scale decide on virtue, as it were by grains and scruples; thus furnishing a standard of virtue subversive of that which Christianity establishes. This method, instead of marking the moral distinctions, blends and confounds them, by establishing character on an accidental difference, often depending on circumstance and occasion, instead of applying to it one eternal rule and motive of action. *

* If these remarks may be thought too severe by some readers, for that degree of scepticism which appears in Mr. Hume's *History*, may I not be allowed to observe, that he has shown his principles so fully in some of his other works, that we are entitled, on the ground of these works, to read with suspicion every thing he says which borders on religion? — A circumstance apt to be forgotten by many who read *only* his History.

But, there is another evil into which writers far more unexceptionable than Mr. Hume often fall, that of rarely leading the mind to look beyond second causes and human agents. It is mortifying to refer them to the example of a Pagan. Livy thought it no disgrace to proclaim, repeatedly, the insufficiency of man to accomplish great objects without divine assistance. *He* was not ashamed to refer events to the direction and control of Providence; and when he speaks of notorious criminals, he is not contented with describing them as transgressing against the state, but represents them as also offending against the gods.

Yet, it is proper, again, to notice the defects of ancient authors in their views of providential interference; a defect arising from their never clearly including a future state in their account. They seem to have conceived themselves as fairly *entitled* by their good conduct to the divine favour, which favour they usually limited to present prosperity. Whereas all notions of divine justice must of necessity be widely erroneous in which a future retribution is not unambiguously and constantly included.

CHAP. XII.

IMPORTANT ERAS OF ENGLISH HISTORY.

As the annals of our own country furnish an object on which a royal student should be led to dwell with particular interest, it may be necessary to call the attention to certain important periods of our history and constitution, from each of which we begin to reckon a new era; because from that epoch some new system of causes and effects begins to take place.

It will be proper, however, to trace the shades of alteration which intervene between these eras; for, though the national changes appear to be brought about by some one great event, yet, the event itself will be found to have been slowly working its way by causes trivial in their appearance, and gradual in their progress. For the minds of the people must be previously ripened for a change, before any material alteration is produced. It was not the injury that Lucretia sustained, which kindled the resentment of the Romans; the previous misconduct of the Tarquins had excited in the people the spirit of that revolution. A momentary indignation brought a series of discontents to a crisis, and one public crime was seized on as the pretence for revenging a long

course of oppression. — The arrival, however, of these slowly produced eras makes a sudden and striking change in the circumstances of a country, and forms a kind of distinct line of separation between the manners which precede and those which follow it.

A prince (whose chief study must be politics) ought in general to prefer contemporary historians, and even ordinary annalists, to the compilers of history who come after them. He should have recourse to the documents from which authors derive their history, rather than sit down satisfied with the history so derived. Life, however, is too short to allow, in all cases, of this laborious process. Attention, therefore, to the minuter details of contemporary annalists, and to the original records consisting of letters and state papers, must be limited to periods of more than ordinary importance. Into these the attentive politician will dive for himself, and he will often be abundantly repaid. — The periods, for example, of the unhappy contest in the reign of the first Charles, of the Restoration, and more especially of the Revolution, are the turning points of our political constitution. A prince, by examining these original documents, and by making himself master of the points then at issue, would be sure to understand what are his own rights as a sovereign.

It is not by single, but by concurrent testimony, that the truth of history is established. And it is by a careful perusal of different authors who treat of the same period, that a series of historic truth

will be extracted. Where they agree, we may trust that they are right: where they differ, we must elicit truth from the collision. Thus the royal pupil, when engaged in the perusal of Clarendon, should also study some of the best writers, who are favourable to the parliamentary cause. A careful perusal of Ludlow and Whitlock; a general survey of Rushworth, or occasional reference to that author and to Thurloe; and a cursory review of their own *lives* and *times* by Laud and Baxter, will throw great light on many of the transactions of the eventful period of the first Charles. They will show how different the same actions appear to different men, equal in understanding and integrity. They will enforce mutual candour and mutual forbearance, repressing the wholesale conclusions of party violence, and teaching a prince to be on his guard against the intemperate counsels of his interested or heated advisers. They will instruct a monarch in the important lesson of endeavouring to ascertain and keep in view the light in which his actions and motives will appear to his people. They will teach him to attend carefully to the opinions and feelings, and even to the prejudices of the times; and, in obedience to a precept enjoined by divine authority for private life, and still more important to be observed in public, — "to provide things honest in the sight of all men."

Again, while the narratives of the contemporary historians furnish facts, they who live in a succeeding age have the additional advantages, first,

of a chance of greater impartiality; secondly, of a comparison with corresponding events; and, thirdly, of having the tendencies of the events related, appreciated by the evidence of their actual effects. How imperfect, for example, would be the philosophical and political remarks, and how false the whole colour belonging to any history of the French Revolution which might have immediately appeared.* Much lapse of time is necessary in order to reflect back light on the original tendency of events. The fermentation of political passions requires a long time to subside. The agitation continues till the events have nearly lost their interest by the occurrence of a fresh class of events; which, in their turn, raise a new party, and excite a new interest: so that an impartial distribution of praise and censure is seldom made till those who are concerned in it have been long out of hearing. And it is an inconvenience inseparable from human things, that when writers are least able to come at the truth, they are most disposed to tell it.

It will be necessary to understand the political system of Europe, since that period particularly, when the two powers of France and Austria having arisen to a greatness, which made them mutually, as well as generally formidable, other countries seeing the necessity for their own safety, of opposing the stronger, and supporting the

* The French Revolution, with its consequences, seems intended practically to contradict what Thucydides declared to be his design in writing history; namely, *by a faithful account of past things to assist mankind in conjecturing the future.*

weaker, conceived the idea of that balance of power, that just equiponderance, which might preserve the security of all.

But there is a far earlier epoch to which attention ought, perhaps, in the very first instance, to be directed, — I mean the reign of Alfred. This is eminently a study for kings. — In Alfred, the most vigorous exertion of public justice was united with attachment to public liberty. He eagerly seized every interval of tranquillity, from the convulsions with which the state was torn, to collect materials for the most salutary institutions, which he afterwards established; he employed every moment he could snatch from the wars in which he was inevitably engaged, in introducing the arts of peace, and in turning the minds of his harassed and disorderly subjects to virtuous and industrious pursuits; in repairing the mischievous consequences of past insurrections, and wisely guarding against their return. He had to correct the habits of a people who had lived without laws, and without morals; and to reduce to civilisation men who had been driven to subsist by chance or rapine. — By a system of jurisprudence, which united moral discipline with the execution of penal laws, he undertook to give a new direction to habits inveterately depraved.

The royal pupil will be taught to ascribe the origin of some of our best usages to these sagacious regulations; above all, the conception of that unparalleled idea which so beautifully reconciles the exact administration of justice with individual

liberty: the origin of our juries evidently appearing to have first entered the mind of Alfred. The effects on the people seem to have been proportioned to the exertions of the Prince. Crimes were repressed. The most unexampled change took place in the national manners. Encouragement was held out to the reformed, while punishment kept in order the more irreclaimable. Yet, with all these strong measures, never was prince more tenderly alive to the liberty of the subject. And while commerce, navigation, ingenious inventions, and all the peaceful arts, were promoted by him, his skill in the military tactics of that day was superior, perhaps, to that of any of his contemporaries.

To form such vast projects, not for disturbing the world, but for blessing it, — to reduce those projects, in many instances, to the most minute detail of actual execution; to have surmounted the misfortune of a neglected education so as to make himself a scholar, a philosopher, and the moral as well as civil instructor of his people; — all this implies such a grandeur of capacity, such an exact conception of the true character of a sovereign, such sublimity of principle, and such corresponding rectitude of practice, as fill up all our ideas of consummate greatness. — In a word, Alfred seems to have been sent into the world to realise the beautiful fiction, which poets, philosophers, and patriots, have formed of a perfect king. It is also worth observing, that all those various plans were both projected and executed by a monarch,

who, as all historians agree, had suffered more hardships than any ordinary adventurer, had fought more battles than most generals, and was the most voluminous author of his day.* And, if it should be asked by what means a single individual could accomplish such a variety of projects, the answer is simply this: It was in a good measure by an art of which little account is made, but which is perhaps of more importance in a sovereign than almost any other, at least it is one without which the brightest genius is often of little value, *a strict economy of time.*

Between the earlier life of Alfred and that of Charles II. there was, as must be observed, a striking similarity. The paths of both to the throne were equally marked by such imminent dangers and "hair-breadth 'scapes," as more resemble romance than authentic history. What a lesson had Alfred prepared for Charles! But their characters as kings exhibited an opposition which is as strong as the resemblance in their previous fortunes. With an understanding naturally good, with that education which Alfred wanted, — with every advantage which an improved state of society could give over a barbarous one; such, notwithstanding, was the uniform tenour of the Stuart's subsequent life, as almost to present the idea of an intended contrast to the virtues of the illustrious Saxon.

* See the character of Alfred in Hume; from which the preceding part of this account, in substance, is chiefly taken.

Another epoch to which the pupil's attention should be pointed, is the turbulent and iniquitous reign of King John; whose oppression and injustice were, by the excess to which they were carried, the providential means of rousing the English spirit, and of obtaining the establishment of the great charter. This famous transaction, so deservedly interesting to Englishmen, bestowed or secured the most valuable civil privileges; chiefly, indeed, to the barons and clergy, but also to the people at large. The privileges of the latter had, antecedently, been scarcely taken into the account, and their liberties, always imperfect, had suffered much infringement by the introduction of the feudal law into England under the Norman William. For, whether they were vassals under the barons, or vassals under the king, it made little difference in their condition; which was, in fact, to the greater part, little better than a state of absolute slavery. The barons, liberal, perhaps, through policy rather than humanity, in struggling for their own liberty, were compelled to involve in one common interest the liberty of the people; and the same laws which they demanded to secure their own protection, in some measure necessarily extended their benign influence to the inferior classes of society. Those immunities, which are essential to the well-being of civil and social life, gradually became better secured. Injustice was restrained, tyrannical exactions were guarded against, and oppression was no longer sanctioned. This famous deed, without any violent innovation, became the

mound of property, the pledge of liberty, and the guarantee of independence. As it guarded the rights of all orders of men, from the lowest to the highest, it was vigorously contended for by all; for, if it limited the power of the king, it also confirmed it, by securing the allegiance and fidelity of the subject. — It was of inestimable use by giving a determinate form and shape, "such a local habitation and a name," to the spirit of liberty; so that the English, when, as it often happened, they claimed the recognition of their legal rights, were not left to wander in a wide field, without having any specific object, without limitation, and without direction. *They knew what to ask for*, and obtaining that, they were satisfied. *We* surely cannot but be sensible of the advantages which they derived from this circumstance, who have seen the effects of an opposite situation, in this very particular, illustrated so strikingly in the earlier period of the French Revolution.

But rapidity of progress seems, by the very laws of nature, to be precluded, where the benefit is to be radical and permanent. It was not, therefore, until our passion for making war within the territory of France was cured, nor until we left off tearing the bowels of our own country in the dissensions of the Yorkists and Lancastrians, after having, for near four hundred years, torn those of our neighbours; in a word, it was not until both foreign and civil fury began to cool, that in the reign of Henry VII. the people began to enjoy more real freedom, as the king enjoyed a more

settled dominion, and the interests of peace and commerce substantially prevailed. — Without ascribing to this king virtues which he did not possess, the view of his reign, with all its faults, affords a kind of breathing time, and sense of repose. It is from this reign that the history of the laws and civil constitution of England become interesting; as that of our ecclesiastical constitution does from the subsequent reign. A general acquaintance with the antecedent part of our history may suffice for the royal pupil, but from these periods she cannot possess too detailed a knowledge of it.

CHAP. XIII.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

It is remarkable that in France, a nation in which women have always been held in the highest consideration, their genius has never been called to its loftiest exercise. France is, perhaps, the only country which has never been governed by a woman. The mothers, however, of some of her sovereigns, when minors, have, during their regencies, Blanche of Castile * especially, discovered talents for government not inferior to those of most of her kings.

Anne of Austria has had her eulogist; but in her character there seems to have been more of intrigue than of genius, or at least, than of sound sense; and her virtues were problematical. If her talents had some splendour, they had no solidity. They produced a kind of stage effect, which was imposing, but not efficient; and she was rather an actress of royalty than a great queen. She was not happy in the choice of a friend. The source of all Mazarin's greatness, she supported him with inflexible attachment, and established him in more than regal power. In return, he treated her with respect as long as

* Mother of Louis IX.

he stood in need of her protection, and set her aside when her support was become no longer necessary to his confirmed power.

The best queens have been most remarkable for employing great men. Among these, Zenobia, Elizabeth, and Anne stand foremost. Those who wish to derogate from the glories of a female reign, have never failed to urge, that they were owing to the wisdom of the ministers, and not to that of the queen; a censure which involves an eulogium. For, is not the choice of sagacious ministers the characteristic mark of a sagacious sovereign? — Would, for instance, Mary di Medici have chosen a Walsingham; she who made it one of the first acts of her regency to banish Sully, and to employ Concini? Or, did it ever enter into the mind of the first Mary of England to take into her councils that Cecil, who so much distinguished himself in the cabinet of her sister?

Elizabeth's great natural capacity was, as has been before observed, improved by an excellent education. Her native vigour of mind had been early called forth by a series of uncommon trials. The circumspection she had been, from childhood, obliged to exercise, taught her prudence. The difficulties which beset her accustomed her to self-control. Can we, therefore, doubt, that the steadiness of purpose, and undaunted resolution which she manifested on almost every occasion during her long reign, were greatly to be attributed to that youthful discipline? She would probably never have acquired such an ascendancy

over the mind of others, had she not early learned so absolute a command over her own.

On coming to the crown she found herself surrounded with those obstacles which display great characters, but overset ordinary minds. The vast work of the Reformation, which had been undertaken by her brother Edward, but crushed in the very birth, as far as was within human power, by the bigot Mary, was resumed and accomplished by Elizabeth; and that, not in the calm of security, not in the fulness of undisputed power, but even while that power was far from being confirmed, and that security was liable, every moment, to be shaken by the most alarming commotions. She had prejudices, apparently insurmountable, to overcome; she had heavy debts to discharge; she had an almost ruined navy to repair; she had a debased coin to restore; she had empty magazines to fill; she had a decaying commerce to invigorate; she had an exhausted exchequer to replenish. — All these, by the blessing of God on the strength of her mind, and the wisdom of her councils, she accomplished. She not only paid her own debts, but, without any great additional burdens on her subjects, she discharged those also which were due to the people from her two immediate predecessors. At the same time, she fostered genius, she encouraged literature, she attracted all the great talents of the age within the sphere of her own activity. And, though she constantly availed herself of all the judgment and talents of her ministers, her acquiescence in their

measures was that of conviction, never of implicit confidence.

Her exact frugality may not, by superficial judges, be reckoned among the shining parts of her character. Yet, those who see more deeply, must allow, that it was a quality from which the most important benefits were derived to her people; and without which, all her great abilities would have been comparatively inefficient. The parsimony of her grandfather was the rapine and exaction of an extortioner; hers, the wise economy of a provident parent. If we are to judge of the value of actions by their consequences, let us compare the effects upon the country, of the prodigality, both of her father and of her successor, with her own frugality. As it has been asserted by Plutarch *, that the money idly thrown away by the Athenians on the representations of two dramatic poets only amounted to a larger sum than had been expended on all their wars against the Persians in defence of their liberty; so it has been affirmed, that the first James spent more treasure on his favourites than it had cost Elizabeth to maintain all her wars. Yet, there have not been wanting historians, who have given the praise of liberality to James, and especially to Henry, while Elizabeth has suffered the imputation of avarice. But we ought to judge of good and evil by their own weight and measure, and not by the specious

* In his enquiry whether the Athenians were more eminent in the arts of war or peace.

names which the latter can assume, nor by the injurious terms which may be bestowed on the former.

It is not from the splenetic critic in retired life, from the declaimer, ignorant of the duties and the requisitions of princes, that we should take our sentiments on the point of royal economy; but from men, who, however, possessing different characters and views, yet agree in this one respect, that their exalted public situations, and great personal experience, enable them to give a fair and sound opinion. The judgment even of the Emperor Tiberius was not so impaired by his vices, but that he could insist, that an exchequer, exhausted by prodigality, must be replenished by oppression. Cicero, versed in public business, no less than in the knowledge of mankind, affirms, that "a liberal prince loses more hearts than he gains, and that the resentment of those from whom he takes the money is much stronger than the gratitude of those to whom he gives it." And, on another occasion he says, that "men are not aware what a rich treasury frugality is." The same sentiments seem to have been adopted by another Roman statesman, a royal favourite too. Pliny affirms, that "a prince will be pardoned who gives nothing to his subjects, provided he takes nothing away from them."

Those princes who, despising frugality, have been prodigal for the sake of a little temporary applause, have seldom achieved lasting good. And, allowing that this lavish generosity may be

for the moment a popular quality; yet there is scarcely any thing which has contributed to bring more calamities on a state, than the means used for enabling the prince to indulge it. It was not in Rome alone, as recent instances testify, that when the government has wanted money, the rich have been always found to be the guilty. A prodigal generosity, as we have seen in the case of Cæsar, and in our own time, may be an useful instrument for paving the way to a throne; but an established sovereign will find economy a more certain means of keeping him in it. The Emperor Nero was extolled for the felicity which he was diffusing by his bounty, while Rome was groaning under the burden of his exactions. That liberality which would make a prince necessitous and a people poor, would, by hurting his fame, weaken his influence; for reputation is power. After all, such a care and improvement of the revenue as will enable him to spare his subjects, is the truest liberality in a prince.

But, to return. — The distinguishing qualities of Elizabeth appear to have been economy, prudence, and moderation. Yet, in some instances, the former was rigid, not to say unjust.* Nor had her frugality always the purest motive. She was, it is true, very unwilling to trouble parliament for money, for which, indeed, they were extremely unwilling to be troubled: but her desire to keep herself independent of them seems to have

* Particularly her keeping the see of Ely vacant nineteen years, in order to retain the revenue.

been the motive for this forbearance. What she might have gained in supplies, she must have lost in power.

To her moderation and that middle line of conduct which she observed, much of her success may be ascribed. To her moderation in the contests between Papists and Puritans, it is chiefly to be attributed, that the Reformation issued in a happier medium in England than in any other country. — To her moderation, in respect to foreign war, from which she was singularly averse, may be ascribed that rapid improvement at home, which took place under her reign. — If we were to estimate Elizabeth as a private female, she would doubtless appear entitled to but little veneration. If as an instrument raised up by divine Providence to carry through the most arduous enterprises in the most difficult emergencies, we can hardly rate her too highly. We owe her much, as Englishmen. As Protestants, what do we not owe her? If we look at the woman, we shall see much to blame; if at the sovereign, we shall see almost every thing to admire. Her great faults, though they derogated from her personal character, seldom deeply affected her administration. In one instance only, her favouritism was prejudicial to the state; her appointment of Leicester to the naval command, for which he was utterly unfit. — On many occasions, as we have elsewhere observed, her very passions supplied what was wanting in principle. Thus, her violent attachments might have made her in-

discriminately lavish, if they had not been counteracted by that parsimoniousness which never forsook her. Accordingly, in the midst of her lamentations for the death of Leicester, we see her grief did not make her forget to seize his goods, and to repay herself for what she had lent him.

Our censures, therefore, must not be lost in our admiration, nor must our gratitude warp our judgment. And it may be useful to enquire how it came to pass that Elizabeth, with so much power, so much prudence, and so much popularity, should at length become completely miserable, and die neglected and forsaken, her sun setting ingloriously after so bright a day of prosperity and honour.

May we not venture to attribute it to the defectiveness, not to say unsoundness, of her moral principles? Though corrupt principles, for a certain period, may conceal themselves, and even dazzle, by the success of the projects to which, in the view of superficial reasoners, they may have appeared conducive, they will, in a long course of action, betray their intrinsic weakness. They may not entirely have prevented the public good effects of other useful qualities with which they were associated: but they do most fatally operate against the personal honour of the individual; and against her reaping that harvest of gratitude and respect, to which she might otherwise have been so justly entitled.

Vanity was, too probably, the spring of some of Elizabeth's most admired actions; but the same

vanity also produced that jealousy, which terminated in the death of Mary. It was the same vanity which led her first to court the admiration of Essex, and then to suffer him to fall a victim to her wounded pride. Her temper was uncontrolled. While we pardon her ignorance of the principles of liberty, we should not forget how little she respected the privileges of parliament, claiming a right of imprisoning its very members, without deigning to give any account of her proceedings.

Policy was her favourite science, but in that day a liberal policy was not understood; and Elizabeth was too apt to substitute both simulation and dissimulation for an open and generous conduct. This dissimulation at length lost her the confidence of her subjects; and while it inspired her with a distrust, it also forfeited the attachment of her friends. Her insincerity, as was natural, infected those around her. The younger Cecil himself was so far alienated from his royal mistress, and tainted with the prevailing spirit of intrigue, as to be secretly corresponding with her rival James.

That such mortifying occurrences were too likely to arise, from the very nature of existing circumstances, where the dying prince was the last of her race, and the nearly vacant throne about to be possessed by a stranger, must assuredly be allowed. But it may still be asserted, that nothing but deficiency of moral character could have so desolated the closing scene of an illustrious princess. Real virtue will, in every rank, draw upon

it disinterested regard; and a truly virtuous sovereign will not be shut out from a more than ordinary share in this general blessing. It is honourable to human nature to see the dying William pressing to his bosom the hand of Bentinck; but it will be still more consolatory, as well as instructive, to compare, with the forsaken deathbed of Elizabeth, the exemplary closing scene of the second Mary, as described by Burnet, an eyewitness of the affecting event which he relates.

CHAP. XIV.

MORAL ADVANTAGES TO BE DERIVED FROM THE STUDY OF HISTORY, INDEPENDENT OF THE EXAMPLES IT EXHIBITS. — HISTORY PROVES THE CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE. — IT DEMONSTRATES THE SUPERINTENDING POWER OF PROVIDENCE — ILLUSTRATED BY INSTANCES.

THE knowledge of great events and splendid characters, and even of the customs, laws, and manners of different nations; an acquaintance, however accurate, with the state of the arts, sciences, and commerce of those nations, important as is this knowledge, must not, however, be considered as of primary importance in the study of history. There are still higher uses to which that study may be turned. 'History furnishes a strong practical illustration of one of the fundamental doctrines of our religion, the corruption of human nature. To this truth it constantly bears witness, by exemplifying it under every shape, and shade, and colour, and gradation; the annals of the world, indeed, from its commencement to the present hour, presenting little else than a strongly interwoven tissue of those corruptions, and their attendant calamities.

History every where proves the helplessness and natural inability of man, the insufficiency of all such moral principles as can be derived from nature and experience; the necessity of explicit

instruction respecting our true happiness, and of divinely communicated strength in order to its attainment; and, consequently, the inconceivable worth of that life and immortality which are so fully brought to light by the Gospel.

That reader looks to little purpose over the eventful page of history, who does not accustom himself to mark therein the finger of the Almighty, governing kings and kingdoms; prolonging or contracting the duration of empires; tracing out before-hand, in the unimpeachable page of the prophet Daniel*, an outline of successive empires, which subsequent events have realised with the most critical exactness; and describing their eventual subservience to the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, with a circumstantial accuracy which the the well-informed Christian, who is versed in Scripture language, and whose heart is interested in the subject, reads with unutterable and never-ceasing astonishment. It is, in fact, this wonderful

* The parts of the book of Daniel chiefly alluded to are Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and Daniel's interpretation of it, in the 2d chapter; and his own vision of the four beasts, in the 8th. These two passages alone, preserved, as they have been, by the most inveterate enemies of Christianity, amount to an irrefragable demonstration that our religion is divine. One of the most ancient and most learned opposers of Revelation is said to have denied the possibility of these prophecies having existed before the events; but we know they *did* exist, and no modern infidel *dares* to dispute it. But in admitting this, however they may take refuge in their own inconsequence of mind, they inevitably, though indirectly, allow the truth of Christianity.

correspondence which gives its highest value to the more ancient half of the historic series. What would it profit us, at this day, to learn from Xenophon, that the Assyrian monarch had subjugated all those countries, with the exception of Media, which spread eastward from the Mediterranean, if it were not that, by this statement, he confirms that important portion of sacred and prophetic history? And to what solidly useful purpose would the same historian's detail of the taking of Babylon be applicable, if it did not forcibly, as well as minutely, illustrate the almost equally detailed denunciations of the prophet Isaiah? It was partly for the purpose of elucidating this correspondence between sacred prophecy and ancient history; and showing by how regular a providential chain the successive empires of the ancient world were connected with each other, and ultimately with Christianity, that the excellent Rollin composed his well-known work: and the impression which his researches left upon his own mind may be seen in those sublimely pious remarks with which his last volume is concluded.

A careful perusal of the historical and prophetical parts of Scripture will prepare us for reading profane history with great advantage. In the former, we are admitted within the veil, we are informed how the vices of nations drew down on them the wrath of the Almighty; and how some neighbouring potentate was employed as the instrument of divine vengeance.

How his ambition, his courage, and military skill, were but the means of fulfilling the divine prediction, or of inflicting the divine punishment. How, when the mighty conqueror, the executioner of the sentence of Heaven, had performed his assigned task, he was put aside, and was himself, perhaps, in his turn, humbled and laid low. Such are the familiar incidents of historic and prophetic Scripture. But, in addition to the stock of knowledge which we receive from thence, we shall have learned in the divine school to little purpose, if we do not find the benefit of our studies in the general impression and habits of mind which we derive from them; if we do not open our eyes to the agency of Providence in the varying fortunes of nations, and in the talents, characters, and fates of the chief actors in the great drama of life.

Do we read in the prophetic page the solemn call and designation of Cyrus? — Let us learn to recognise no less, as the instrument of the Almighty, a Gustavus, and a Marlborough! Are we many hundred years before, informed by Him who can alone see the end from the beginning, of the military exploits of the conqueror of Babylon, and the overturner of the Assyrian empire? — Let us learn to refer no less to that same All-disposing Power the victories of Lützen and of Blenheim, the humiliation of Austrian arrogance, and of French ambition.

Another important end of the study of general history, distinct from that which has just been mentioned, but by no means unconnected with it,

is the contemplation of divine wisdom and goodness, as exercised in gradually civilising the human race, through the instrumentality of their own agitation. In this view the mind of the pupil should be particularly led to observe that mysterious, yet most obvious, operation of Providence, by which, through successive ages, the complicated chaos of human agency has been so over-ruled as to make all things work together for general good; the hostile collision of nations being often made conducive, almost in its immediate consequences, to their common benefit, and often rendered subservient to the general improvement, and progressive advancement, of the great commonwealth of mankind.

If this view, respecting the world at large, should be deemed too vast for satisfactory consideration, it may be limited to that part with which we are most nearly connected; and to which it is hardly too bold to say, that Divine Providence itself has, during the latter ages of the world, seemed to direct its chief attention — I mean the continent of Europe. Let it simply be asked, what was the state of this continent two thousand years ago? The answer must be — From the Alps to the Frozen Ocean, a moral as well as physical wilderness. — That the human powers were formed for extended exercise, and in some sense for boundless improvement, the very contemplation of those powers is sufficient to evince. But that improvement had not then begun, nor was the frost of their dreariest winter

more benumbing than that in which their minds had been for ages locked up. To what, then, but a regular design of Providence can we attribute the amazing change? And it is doubtless the part, no less of religious gratitude than of philosophical curiosity, to enquire into the series of instrumental causes by which the transformation was effected. This interesting and most instructive intelligence is conveyed to us by history. We mark the slow but steady developement of the wise and benevolent plan. We see the ambition of Rome breaking up the soil with its resistless plough-share, and scattering even through these British isles the first seeds of civilisation. We see the northern invaders burst forth with irresistible violence, bringing back, to all human appearance, the former desolation; but, in reality, conducing, though with an operation like that of lava from a volcano, to a richer harvest of social and civil happiness. We see all that was really valuable spring up again afresh, mingled with new principles of utility and comfort; and above all, quickened and enriched by the wide-spread influences of a pure and heavenly religion. We see the violent passions providentially let loose, when it was necessary for society to be roused from a pernicious torpor. — We see an enthusiastic rage for conquests in Asia inducing an activity of mind and enlargement of view, out of which eventually grew commerce, liberty, literature, philosophy, and at length, even religious reformation. In brief, if in our perusal of his-

tory, we take true wisdom for our guide, we shall not only be instructed by that gracious progressiveness which is discernible in past events, but, notwithstanding the awful concussions of the present period, we shall learn to trust Almighty wisdom and goodness for what is to come. And we shall be ready to indulge the hope of a yet greatly increased happiness of mankind, when we consider, that the hand which brought us from barbarism to our present circumstances is still over us; — that progression to still better habits is equally possible, and equally necessary; and that no means were rendered more conducive to such progress, in the period which is passed, than the agitations of the same awful and afflictive kind which we are now doomed to contemplate.

It will be seen that the same infinite wisdom often permits human evils to balance each other, and in subservience to his grand purpose of general good, not only sets good against evil, but often, where the counteracting principle of religion seems wholly suspended, prevents any fatal preponderance in the scale of human affairs, by allowing one set of vices to counterbalance another. — Thus, societies, which appear, on a general view, to have almost wholly thrown off the divine government, are still preserved for better things, or, perhaps, for the sake of the righteous few, who still remain in them, by means of those exertions which bad men make from selfish motives; or by the vigilance with which one party of bad men watches over another. The clash of parties, and

the opposition of human opinion, are likewise often over-ruled for good. The compages of the public mind, if we may use such a term, are no less kept together, than the component parts of matter, by opposite tendencies. And, as all human agents are nothing but the instruments of God, he can with equal efficacy, though doubtless not with the same complacency, cause the effects of evil passions to be counteracted by each other, as well as by the opposite virtues. For instance, were it not for indolence and the dread of difficulty and danger, ambition would deluge the world in blood. The love of praise, and the love of indulgence, assist, through their mutual opposition, to keep each other in order. Avarice and voluptuousness are almost as hostile to each other as either is to the opposite virtues; therefore, by pulling different ways, they contribute to keep the world in equipoise. Thus, the same divine hand, which had so adjusted the parts and properties of matter, as that their apparent opposition produces, not disruption, but harmony, and promotes the general order, has also conceived, through the action and counteraction of the human mind, that no jar of passion, no abuse of free agency, shall eventually defeat the wise and gracious purposes of Heaven.

For an illustration of these remarks, we scarcely need go farther than the character of our own heroic Elizabeth. Her passions were naturally of the strongest kind; and it must be acknowledged, that they were not always under the control of

principle. To what, then, can we so fairly ascribe the success which, even in such instances, attended her, as to the effect of one strong passion forcibly operating upon another? Inclinations which were too violent to be checked by reason were met and counteracted by opposite inclinations of equal violence; and, through the direction of Providence, the passion finally predominant was generally favourable to the public good.

Do we then mean to admit, that the Almighty approves of these excesses in individuals, by which his wisdom often works for the general benefit? God forbid! Nothing surely could be less approved by Him, than the licentiousness and cruelty of our eighth Henry, though He over-ruled those enormities for the advantages of the community, and employed them, as his instruments, for restoring good government, and for introducing, and at length establishing, the Reformation. England enjoys the inestimable blessing, but the monarch is not the less responsible personally for his crimes. We are equally certain, that God did not approve of the insatiable ambition of Alexander, or of his incredible acquisition of territory by means of unjust wars. Yet, from that ambition, those wars, and those conquests, how much may the condition of mankind have been meliorated? The natural humanity of this hero, which he had improved by the study of philosophy under one of the greatest masters in the world, disposed him to turn his conquests to the benefit of mankind. He founded seventy cities, says his historian, so situated as to

promote commerce and diffuse civilisation. Plutarch* observes, that had those nations not been conquered, Egypt would have had no Alexandria, Mesopotamia no Seleucia. He also informs us, that Alexander introduced marriage into one conquered country, and agriculture into another; that one barbarous nation, which used to eat their parents, was led by him to reverence and maintain them; that he taught the Persians to respect and not to marry their mothers; the Scythians to bury, and not to eat their dead.

There was, on the whole, something so extraordinary in the career of this monarch, and in the results to which it led, that his historian Arrian, amidst all the darkness of Paganism, was induced to say, that Alexander seemed to have been given to the world by a peculiar dispensation of Providence.

Did the same just Providence approve of the usurpation of Augustus over his fallen country? No;—but Providence employed it as the means of restoring peace to remote provinces, which the tyrannical republic had so long harassed and oppressed; and also, of establishing a general uniformity of law, and a facility of intercourse between nation and nation, which were signally subservient to the diffusion of that divine religion, which was so soon to enlighten and to bless mankind.

To adduce one or two instances more, where thousands might be adduced. — Did the Almighty approve those frantic wars, which arrogated to

* Quoted by Gillies, vol. iii. p. 585.

themselves the name of *holy?* Yet, with all the extravagance of the enterprise, and the ruinous failure which attended its execution, many beneficial consequences, as has been already intimated, were permitted, incidentally, to grow out of them. The Crusaders, as their historians demonstrate *, beheld in their march countries in which civilisation had made a greater progress than in their own. They saw foreign manufactures in a state of improvement to which they had not been accustomed at home. They perceived remains of knowledge in the East, of which Europe had almost lost sight. Their native prejudices were diminished in witnessing improvements to which the state of their own country presented comparative barbarity. The first faint gleam of light dawned on them, the first perceptions of taste and elegance were awakened, and the first rudiments of many an art were communicated to them, by this personal acquaintance with more polished countries. Their views of commerce were improved, and their means of extending it were enlarged.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that the excess to which the popes carried their usurpation, and the Romish clergy their corruptions, was, by the Providence of God, the immediate cause of the Reformation. The taking of Constantinople by the Turks, though, in itself, a most deplorable scene of crimes and calamities, became the occasion of most important benefits to our countries, by compelling the only accomplished scholars then

* See especially Robertson's State of Europe.

in the world to seek an asylum in the western parts of Europe. To these countries they carried with them the Greek language, which ere long proved one of the providential means of introducing the most important event that has occurred since the first establishment of Christianity.

May we not *now* add to the number of instances in which Providence has over-ruled the crimes of men for good, a recent exemplification of the doctrine, in the ambition of that person, who, by his unjust assumption of imperial power in a neighbouring nation, has, though unintentionally, almost annihilated the wild outcry of false liberty, and the clamour of mad democracy?

All those contingent events which lie without the limits and calculation of human foresight,—all those variable loose uncertainties which men call chance,—has God taken under his own certain disposal and absolute control. To reduce uncertainty to method, confusion to arrangement, and contingency to order, is solely the prerogative of Almighty power.

Nothing can be further from the intention of these remarks than to countenance, in the slightest degree, the doctrine of optimism in the sense in which it was maintained by Mr. Pope. Far be it from the writer to intimate that the good which has thus providentially been produced out of evil, is greater than the good which would have been produced had no such evil been committed; or to insinuate, that the crimes of men do not diminish the quantitity of good which is enjoyed. This

would, indeed, be to furnish an apology for vice. That God *can* and *does* bring good out of evil is unquestionably true; but to affirm that he brings more, or so much good out of evil as he would have brought out of good, had good been practised, would be indeed a dangerous position.

If, therefore, God often "educes good from ill," yet man has no right to count upon his always doing it, in the same degree in which he appoints that good shall be productive of good. To resume the illustration, therefore, from a few of the instances already adduced, — what an extensive blessing might Alexander, had he acted with other views and to other ends, have proved to that world, whose happiness he impaired by his ambition, and whose morals he corrupted by his example! — How much more effectually, and immediately, might the Reformation have been promoted, had Henry, laying aside the blindness of prejudice, and subduing the turbulence of passion, been the zealous and consistent supporter of the Protestant cause; the virtuous husband of one virtuous wife, and the parent of children *all* educated in the sound principles of the Reformation! — Again, had the popes effectually reformed themselves, how might the unity of the church have been promoted; and even the schisms, which have arisen in Protestant communities, been diminished! It would be superfluous to recapitulate other instances; these, it is presumed, being abundantly sufficient to obviate any charge of the most distant approach towards the fatal doctrine of Necessity.

CHAP. XV.

ON THE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF CHRISTIANITY.

The great leading truths of Scripture are few in number, though the spirit of them is diffused through every page. — The being and attributes of the Almighty; the spiritual worship which he requires; the introduction of natural and moral evil into the world; the restoration of man; the life, death, character, and offices of the Redeemer; the holy example he has given us; the divine system of ethics which he has bequeathed us; the awful sanctions with which they are enforced; the spiritual nature of the eternal world; the necessity of repentance; the pardon of sin through faith in a Redeemer; the offer of divine assistance; and the promise of eternal life. The Scripture describes a multitude of persons who exemplify its truths; whose lives bear testimony to the perfection of the divine law; and whose characters, however clouded with infirmity, and subject to temptation, yet, acting under its authority and influence, evince, by the general tenour of their conduct, that they really embraced religion as a governing principle of the heart, and as the motive to all virtue in the life.

In forming the mind of the royal pupil, an early introduction to these Scriptures, the deposit-

ory of such important truths, will doubtless be considered as a matter of prime concern. And, as her mind opens, it will be thought necessary to point out to her how one great event led to another still greater; till at length we see a series accomplished, and an immovable foundation laid for our faith and hope, which includes every essential principle of moral virtue and genuine happiness.

To have given rules for moral conduct might appear, to mere human wisdom, the aptest method of improving our nature. And, accordingly, we find such a course generally pursued by the ancient moralists, both of Greece and Asia. Of this, it is not the least inconvenient result, that rules must be multiplied to a degree the most burdensome and perplexing. And there would be, after all, a necessity for incessant alteration, as the rules of one age could not be expected to correspond with the manners of another. This inconvenience might, perhaps, in some degree be avoided, by entailing on a people an undeviating sameness of manners. But, even when this has been effected, how oppressively minute, and how disgustingly trivial are the authorised codes of instruction! Of this, every fresh translation from the moral writings of the East is an exemplification; as if the mind could be made pure by overloading the memory!

It is one of the perfections of revealed religion, that, instead of multiplying rules, it establishes principles. It traces up right conduct into a few

radical dispositions, which, when once fully formed, are the natural sources of correspondent temper and action. To implant these dispositions, then, is the leading object of what we may venture to call the Scripture philosophy. And as the heart must be the seat of that which is to influence the whole man, so it is chiefly to the heart that the Holy Scriptures address themselves. Their object is to make us *love* what is *right*, rather than to occupy our understandings with its theory. *Knowledge puffeth up*, says one of our divine instructors, but it is Love that edifieth. And the principle which is here assumed will be found most strictly true, that if a love of goodness be once thoroughly implanted, we shall not need many rules; but we shall act aright from what we may almost call a noble kind of instinct. "If thine eye be single," says our Saviour, "thy whole body shall be full of light." Our religion, as taught in the Scripture, does, in this very instance, evince its heavenly origin. St. Paul, whose peculiar province it seems to have been to explain, as it were scientifically, the great doctrines of his Master, gives us a definition of Christianity, which out-does at once in brevity, in fulness, and even in systematic exactness, all which has been achieved in the art of epitomising, by the greatest masters of human science, — *Faith which worketh by love.*

It is not too much to affirm, that this expression substantially contains the whole scope and tenour of both Testaments; the substance of all morality, and the very life and soul of human virtue and happiness. A want of attention

to what St. Paul means by *faith*, too generally makes the sense of the passage be overlooked. But the well-directed student will discern, that St. Paul assumes exactly what has been intimated above, that God's object in Revelation is not *merely* to convey his *will*, but also to manifest *himself*; not *merely* to promulgate laws for restraining or regulating conduct, but to display his *own* nature and attributes, so as to bring back to himself the hearts and affections of fallen man; and that, accordingly, he means by faith, the effectual and impressive apprehension of God, thus manifested. In his language, it is not a notion of the intellect, nor a tradition coldly residing in the recollection, which the Scriptures exhibit, but an actual persuasion of the divine realities. It is, in short, such a conviction of what is revealed, as gives it an efficacy equal, for every practical purpose, to that which is derived through the evidence of our senses.

Faith, then, in St. Paul's language, is religion in its simplest, inward principle. It is the deep and efficacious impression, which the manifestation of God, made to us in the Scripture, ought in all reason to produce in our hearts; but which it does not produce until, in answer to our earnest prayer, his holy Spirit "opens, as it were, our hearts," to receive the things which are thus presented to our minds. When the unseen realities of religion are able to do more with us than the tempting objects of this visible world, then, and not before, is the divine grace of faith really formed within us.

That this is the scriptural idea of faith, will appear at once from a perusal of that most interesting portion of Scripture, the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews. The definition, with which the chapter commences, states this precise notion: — "Faith is the *substantiation* of things hoped for, the *demonstration* of things not seen." * And the instances adduced are most satisfactory exemplifications. "By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, being moved with fear, prepared an ark," &c. "By faith, Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible." "With the heart," says St. Paul, "man believeth unto righteousness;" that is, when the infinitely awful and inexpressibly engaging views of God, manifesting himself in the Scripture, as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, really and effectually impress themselves on our hearts so as to become the paramount principle of inward and outward conduct; then, and not before, we are, in the Scripture sense, believers. And this faith, if real, must produce love; for, when our minds and hearts are thus impressed, our affections must of necessity yield to that impression. If virtue, said a heathen, could be seen with human eyes, what astonishing love would it excite in us! St. Paul's divine faith realises this very idea. If Moses "en-

* I thus venture to strengthen the expressions in the authorised translation, in order to convey some clearer idea of the original terms; which, as the best critics allow, have, perhaps, a force to which no English words can do justice.

dured as *seeing* him who is invisible," it could only be, because, in seeing God, he beheld what filled up his whole soul, and so engaged his hopes and fears, but, above all, his love, as to raise him above the low allurements of the world, and the puny menaces of mortals. It is said of him, that "he accounted even the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt;" a preference which implies the strongest *affection*, as well as the deepest *conviction*. His case, then, clearly illustrates what St. Paul says of *faith working by love*; his apprehension of God being so deep and lively, as to fix his supreme love on that supreme excellence, which was thus, as it were, visible to his mind; the current of his temper, and the course of his actions, followed this paramount direction of his heart.

The Scripture, then, in reality, does not so much *teach us how* to be virtuous, as, if we comply with its intention, actually *makes* us so. It is St. Paul's argument through the Epistle to the Romans, that even the most perfect code of laws which could be given would fall infinitely short of our exigencies, if it only gave the rules, without inspiring the disposition.

The law of Moses had afforded admirable moral precepts, and even the sages of the heathen world had found out many excellent maxims; but, an inspiriting principle, by which men might be made to *love* goodness as well as to *know* it, was that of which the Gentiles, and, in some measure, the Jews also, stood in need. And to furnish this

principle by inspiring such a faith in God, as must produce love to God, and, by producing love to God, become operative in every species of virtue, is avowedly the supreme object of the Gospel of Christ.

And therefore it is, that the Scripture represents to us *facts*, and doctrines founded on facts rather than *theories*; because facts are alone fitted to work on the heart. In theories, the understanding acts for itself; in apprehending facts, it acts subserviently to the higher powers of the soul, merely furnishing to the affections those objects for which they naturally look; and distinguishing false and seductive appearances from real sources of delight and comfort. In this way the sacred Scriptures make the fullest use of our rational powers, uniformly presenting such facts as grow clearer the more severely they are examined: completely satisfying our understandings as to their aptness to the great purpose of working on our hearts, and, on the whole, making our religion as reasonable, as if, like mathematical truth, it had been exclusively addressed to our intellect; while its influence on the rightly disposed heart gives such an inward proof of its divinity as no merely rational scheme could, in the nature of things, possess.

Let, then, the royal pupil be carefully taught, that Christianity is not to be examined, nor the sacred Scriptures perused as if they were merely to be believed, and remembered, and held in speculative reverence. But, let it rather be impressed

upon her, that the Holy Scriptures are God's great means of producing in her heart that awe of his presence, that reverence of his majesty, that delight in his infinite perfections, that practical, affectionate knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent, which constitutes the *rest*, the *peace*, the *strength*, the *light*, the *consolation* of every soul which attains to it. Let her be taught to regard the oracles of God not merely as a light to guide her steps, but as a sacred fire to animate and invigorate her inmost soul. A purifying flame, like that upon the altar, from whence the seraph conveyed the coal to the lips of the prophet, who cried out, "Lo! this hath touched my lips, and mine iniquity is taken away, and my sin is purged."

That fear of God, which the Scripture, when used as it ought, never fails to inspire, is felt by the possessor to be essential wisdom; and that love of God, which it is no less fitted to excite, is equally acknowledged by him whom it influences, to be at once essential virtue and essential happiness; and both united, are found to be that pure element in which rational intelligences are formed to live, and out of which they must ever be perturbed and miserable.

But to make the Scripture thus efficacious, it must be studied according to the will of him who gave it. It is said of our Saviour in the instance of his disciples, — "Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures;" and it is said of Lydia, St. Paul's first

convert at Philippi, "That the Lord opened her heart, to attend to the things which were spoken of Paul." We read of others of whom it is observed, "The Gospel was preached, but it did not profit them, because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it." What follows? evidently, that the Scripture, to be read effectually, must be read devoutly; with earnest and constant prayer to him whose word it is, that he would so impress it on our hearts, by his good spirit, that it may indeed become the power of God unto salvation. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God," says St. James, "who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

But, one grand peculiarity of Christianity remains to be mentioned, — that it addresses us not merely as ignorant, but as prejudiced and corrupt; as needing not merely instruction, but reformation. This reformation can be accomplished, these prejudices and these corruptions can be removed, only by divine power. It is a new creation of the soul, requiring, no less than its original formation, the hand of the divine artificer. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him." God must reveal them by his spirit; he must produce the disposition to receive them.

To this end no kind of previous knowledge is more conducive than the knowledge of ourselves as fallen, depraved, and helpless creatures; and, therefore, absolutely requiring some such gra-

cious interposition in our favour as that which the Scripture offers. Exactly as the malady is felt, will the remedy be valued; and, consequently, no instruction can be more indispensable for the royal pupil than that which tends to impress on her mind, that in this respect she stands on a level with the meanest of her fellow-creatures. That from the natural corruption of every human heart, whatever amiable qualities an individual may possess, each carries about with him a root of bitterness, which, if not counteracted by the above means, will spread itself through the whole soul, disfigure the character, and disorder the life; that this malignant principle, while predominant, will admit but of a shadowy and delusive semblance of virtue which temptation ever dissipates, and from which the heart never receives solid comfort. Who can enumerate the hourly calamities which the proud, the self-willed, the voluptuous, are inflicting on themselves; which rend and lacerate the bosom, while no eye perceives it? Who can express the daily disappointment, the alternate fever and lassitude of him, whose heart knows of no rest, but what this disordered world can afford?

Who then is happy? He alone, whether prince or subject, who, through the powerful and salutary influence of revealed religion on his heart, is so impressed with things invisible, as to rise superior to the viscissitudes of mortality; who so believes and feels what is contained in the Bible, as to make God his refuge, his Saviour his trust, and

true practical holiness the chief object of his pursuit. To such a one, his Bible and his closet are a counterpoise to all the trials and the violence to which he may be exposed. "Thou shalt hide them privily," says the Psalmist, "by thine own presence, from the provoking of all men; thou shalt keep them secretly in thy pavilion from the strife of tongues."

CHAP. XVI.

ON THE SCRIPTURE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.—THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION PECULIARLY ADAPTED TO THE EXIGENCIES OF MAN; AND ESPECIALLY CALCULATED TO SUPPLY THE DEFECTS OF HEATHEN PHILOSOPHY.

If Christianity were examined with attention and candour, it would be found to contain irresistible evidence of its divine origin. Those who have formed continued trains of argument in its support have, no doubt, often effected very valuable purposes; but it is certain, that conviction may be attained in a much simpler method. In fact it would imply a very reasonable charge against Christianity, if its proofs were of such a nature, that none but scholars or philosophers could feel their conclusiveness.

A book exists in the world, purporting to contain the authentic records, and authoritative principles of the one true religion. It is obviously the work not of one person, or of one age. Its earliest pages, on the contrary, are, beyond all sober question, the most ancient writings in the world; while its later parts were confessedly composed at a time much within the limits of historic certainty; a time, indeed, with which we are better acquainted than with any other period in the retrospect of ancient history; and which, like a distant eminence brightly illuminated by the rays of the

sun, is distinctly seen, while intermediate tracts are involved in impenetrable mist.

Against the authority of this most interesting volume, numberless objections have been raised. But, who has yet clearly and satisfactorily shown how its existence, in the form it bears, can be rationally accounted for, on the supposition of its spuriousness? That a series of records originating so variously both as to time, occasion, and circumstance, should involve some obscurity or difficulty, or even, in some instances, apparent incongruity, is surely no cause of wonder; and that these should be dwelt upon, and exaggerated, by persons hostile to the principles which the volume contains, and which its truth would establish, is most natural. But, which of those objectors has ever been able to substitute a system less liable to objection? Have any of them given a satisfactory solution of the unparalleled difficulties which clog *their* hypothesis? Which of them has even attempted fully to explain the simple phenomenon of such a volume being in the world, on the supposition of fabrication or imposture?

This book divides itself into two great portions, the first containing the account of a preparatory religion, given to a single nation; the latter describing the completion of the scheme, so far as to fit this religion for general benefit, and unlimited diffusion.

Respecting the first great portion, which we call the Old Testament, the leading features appear peculiarly striking. In this book alone,

during those ages, was maintained the first great truth, of there being *only* ONE *living and true God*, which, though now so universally acknowledged, was then unconceived by the politest nations and most accomplished philosophers. And respecting both portions of this book, but especially the latter, known by the name of the New Testament, this no less interesting remark is to be made, that, in every essential point, nearly the same view is taken of man's weaknesses and wants, of the nature of the human mind, and what is necessary to its ease and comfort, as is taken by the wisest heathen philosophers; with this most important difference, however, that the *chief good* of man, that *pure perennial mental happiness*, about which they so much discoursed, after which they so eagerly panted, but of which they so confessedly failed, is here spoken of substantially, in their notion of it, as a blessing actually *possessed*, and the feeling of it described in such language as bears, so far as it is possible for human expressions to bear, the stamp of conscious truth and unsophisticated nature.

May we be allowed, in this connection, to give a superficial sketch of the defects in the system of the ancient philosophers? The belief in a life to come was confined to a few, and even in them this belief was highly defective. Those who asserted it, maintained it only in a speculative and sceptical way; and it would not be easy to produce an instance of their using any doctrine of rewards and punishments in a future state, as their *instru-*

ment in promoting virtue. They decorated their system with beautiful sayings, on the immortality of the soul; but they did not support it upon *this* basis. There was, therefore, no foundation to their fabric. *Poetry*, indeed, had her Elysium and her Tartarus. It appears, however, that the *philosophy* of Greece and Rome, in proportion as it advanced, diminished the strength of the impression which the poets had made on the minds of the vulgar; and thus the very religion of the sages tended to lessen among the people the sense of a future responsibility.

The ancient philosophers had no idea of what we designate by the name of the *grace and mercy of God.* They had some conception of his bounty, of his providential care, of all his natural perfections, and of some even of his moral excellencies; for example, of his benevolence and justice. But their united wisdom never framed a sentence like that in which the true God was revealed to Moses: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." It is on this part of the character of God that the Scripture is so abundantly full. This ignorance of the mercy of God associated itself in the Heathens, with much other religious and moral blindness. From this ignorance, that God was merciful, their only means of persuading themselves that they were in his favour, was to assume that they were upright. And who can estimate the moral consequences of an habitual

effort to represent to ourselves all our own actions as not having any of the guilt of sin, and as not impeaching our claims to the justice of the Almighty? The lofty sentiment, that they were themselves a species of gods, was sometimes resorted to, at once as a source of self-complacency, and as the supposed means of virtue. The Stoic affected to rise superior to the temptations of the body, to soar above all sense of guilt, and all dread of pain, by the aid of an extravagant, and almost atheistical sentiment, which was opposite to common sense, and subversive of all true humility, a quality which is the very basis of Christian virtue. He was his own god: for he assumed to himself to be able, by his own strength, if he would but exert it, to triumph over fortune; in other words, over Providence, over pain, fear, and death itself; and to rise, by the same strength, into a participation of the nature of the Eternal. Thus, as an eminent writer has observed, "those who endeavoured to cure voluptuousness, resorted to pride as the means of virtue." In the latter ages, indeed, not a few appear to have been at once elated by Stoical pride, and dissolved in Epicurean luxury.

Their doctrine even of a Providence, connected as it was with the merely mundane system, led to much misconception of the nature of true morality, and to gross superstition. From ignorance of future retribution, they imagined that virtue and vice received their exact recompense *here*. They were religious, therefore, even to superstition, in

assuming the existence of providential interferences in the case of the commission of palpable crimes; and they were tempted to esteem those actions, however sinful, to be no offences against God, which God did not mark by some temporal punishment. *

Such appear to have been some of the chief deficiencies of the heathen system; a system which strongly points out the want of such a light as that which the Gospel affords. The philosophers themselves seemed conscious of some great defect; and thus the very revelation which Christianity has furnished supplied all that was necessary to man, and comes recommended by the acknowledged occasion for it.

How striking are the peculiarities, how obvious the superiority, which, even on a first attentive perusal, fill the mind of the serious reader of the Scripture! But what infidel writer has so much as taken its most obvious facts into sober consideration? who has attempted to explain how the writers of the Old Testament should differ as they have done from all the writers in the world, not only in maintaining so pure a theology, but in connecting with it a national history, through which that theology passes as a chain, binding together and identifying itself with their whole system, civil and religious? This history, involving supernatural events, may be a reason

* A striking instance of this disposition to abuse the doctrine of Providence was exhibited in the speech of Nicias to his soldiers, after they were defeated at Syracuse.

why the wilful infidel should reject it without examination. But let him who pretends to candour, attentively consider these records, and try if he can project even an outline of Jewish history, from which those miraculous interpositions shall be consistently excluded. There are facts in this narration which cannot be disputed: the Jews necessarily having a history as well as other nations. Let the sober infidel, then, endeavour to make out for them an hypothetic history, in which, leaving out every thing miraculous, all the self-evident phenomena shall be accounted for with philosophic plausibility. If this be possible, why has it not been attempted? But if this be really impracticable, I mean if these events do actually so make up the body of their national history, that no history would be left, if they were to be taken away, then let some farther theory be devised, to explain how a history thus exclusively strange, should stand connected with a theology as exclusively true. Let the sober deist prove, if he can, that it was unworthy of the God of nature to distinguish, by such extraordinary interferences, that nation which alone, of all the nations of the earth, acknowledged him; or let him separate, if he be able, that national recognition of the true God from their belief of those distinguishing interpositions. If they alone acknowledged the rightful sovereign of the universe, who believed that that sovereign had signally manifested himself in their behalf, can the deist show that the belief of the events was not essential to the acknowledg-

ment of the supposed author of them? Or will he assert, that the establishment of such a truth amongst that people, who have since actually communicated it to so many other men, perhaps to all, deists not excepted, who really do embrace it; I say, will he soberly assert that such a purpose did not justly and consistently warrant the very kind of interposition which the Jewish history presents?

But let the honest infidel, if such there be, take further into the account the manner in which the maintainers of the one true God have acted upon that belief. Let him examine the principles of the Jewish *moralists*, and see where else, in the ancient world, the genuine interests of virtue are so practically provided for. Let him read the sublime and most cordial effusions of the Old Testament *poets*, and say, where else the Author of being, and of all good, is so fully recognised, or so suitably adored? Let him consider the expostulation of the *prophets*, and the self-criminating records of the *historian*, and find for them any shadow of parallel in the history of mankind. Let the man of *genius* observe how the minds of the writers were elevated, on what a strong and steady pinion they soared. Let the man of *virtue* reflect how deeply their hearts were engaged; and let the man of *learning* compare what he reads here with all that has come from heathen poets, sages, or lawgivers; and then, let it be soberly pronounced, whether it is conceivable that all this should exist, without some adequate cause,

and whether any cause can be so rationally assigned, as that which their venerable lawgiver has himself expressed, in terms the most critically apposite, and the most unaffectedly impressive. "Ask now," says he, "of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon earth; and ask from the one side of heaven to the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God, speaking out of the midst of the fire as thou hast heard, and live? or as God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by an out-stretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you, in Egypt, before your eyes? Unto thee it was shown that the Lord He is God; there is none else beside him. Know, therefore, this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord He is God; in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath, there is none else."

If such be the inevitable conclusion respecting the Old Testament, how much more irresistible must be the impression made by the New! The peculiarity which was adverted to above, ought, even in the eye of a philosophical enquirer, to engage deep attention. I mean, that that to which heathen sages pointed, as the only valuable object of human pursuit, is, in this wonderful volume, described as matter of *possession*. Here, and here only, amongst all the records of human feel-

ings, is happiness seriously claimed, and consistently exemplified. To the importance of this point, witness is borne by every wish which a human being forms, and by every sigh which heaves his bosom. But, it is a fact, perhaps not yet sufficiently adverted to, that at no period do heathen sages seem so strongly to have felt the utter inefficiency of all their schemes for attaining this object, as at the period when the light of Christianity diffused itself through the earth. Cicero, that brightest of Roman luminaries, had not only put his countrymen in possession of the substance of Grecian wisdom, to which his own rich eloquence gave new force and lustre, but he had added thereto the deep results of his own observations, during a life of the most diversified experience, in a period the most eventful. And to this point he uniformly brings all his disquisitions, that man can only be happy by *a conquest over himself*; by some energetic principle of wisdom and virtue so established in his bosom, as to make him habitually superior to every wrong passion, to every criminal or weak desire, to the attractions of pleasure, and the shocks of calamity. But it was not Cicero only who rested in this conclusion: Horace, the gaiest of the Latin poets, is little less explicit in his acknowledgment, that man should then only find ease when he had learnt the art *of flying, in a moral sense, from himself.*

To the sentiment of a great philosopher and poet, let us add that of a no less eminent historian.

Polybius says, "It seems that men, who, in the practice of craft and subtilty, exceed all other animals, may, with good reason, be acknowledged to be no less depraved than they; for other animals are subservient only to the appetites of the body, and by them are led to do wrong. But men, who have also sentiment to guide them, are guilty of ill conduct, not less through the abuse of their acquired reason, than from the force of their natural desires." *

Although, therefore, the doctrine of human depravity be, strictly speaking, a tenet peculiar to Revelation, since it is the Bible alone which teaches how sin entered into the world, and death, with all its attendant woes and miseries, by sin; though it is there alone that we discover the obscurity and confusion which there is in the understanding of the natural man, the crookedness of his will, and the disorder of his affections; though it is there alone that we are led to the origin, and, blessed be God, to the remedy of this disease, in that renewal of our nature, which it is the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit to effect; yet, the wiser and more discerning among the heathens both felt and acknowledged, in no inconsiderable degree, the thing itself. They experienced not a little of the general weight and burden of the effect, though they were still puzzled and confounded in their enquiry after the cause. And their continual disappointment here was an additional

* Hampton's Polybius, book xvii. p. 393.

source of conviction, that the malady which they painted in the deepest colourings of language *did* exist. They seemed to have a perception that there was an object somewhere, which might remedy these disorders, aid these infirmities, satisfy these desires, and bring all their thoughts and faculties into a due obedience and happy regulation. They had a dawning on their minds, that a capacity for happiness was not entirely lost, nor the object to fill and satisfy it quite out of reach. In fact, they felt the greatness of the human mind, but they felt it as a vast vacuity, in which, after all, they could find nothing but phantoms of happiness, and realities of misery.

To these deep-toned complaints, in which all sorts and conditions of men united, Christianity comes forward to make the first propositions of relief. She recognises every want and weakness precisely as these sages represented it; and she confidently offers the very remedy for which they so loudly called. Her professed object is to establish in the human mind that collateral principle of virtuous and happy superiority to every thing earthly, sensual, or selfish, on which philosophy had so long fixed its anxious but hopeless desires, and to which alone it looked for real felicity.

In this view, then, Christianity rests her pretensions, not merely on historical evidences, however satisfactory, nor on the fidelity of successive transcribers, however capable of proof; but on a much more internal, and even more conclusive title, its exquisite correspondence to the exigencies

of human nature, as illustrated by the wisest of all ages and nations, and as felt by every reflecting child of mortality.

Let, then, the deepest sentiments of heathen philosophers and poets, respecting human nature, be dispassionately compared with those expressions of our blessed Saviour, in which he particularly describes the benefits to be enjoyed by his faithful followers; and let it be judged, whether there is not such a correspondence between what *they want*, and what *he professes to bestow*, as occurs in no other instance in the intellectual world. — *Rest* for their souls is what they anxiously sought; and a burning fever of the mind, in which corroding care, insatiable desire, perpetual disappointment, unite in torturing, is the malady of which they uniformly complain. Is it not, then, wonderful to hear our Saviour so admirably adapt his language to their very feelings? "Come unto me," says he, "all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*. — Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find *rest* to your souls." — "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again," intimating, by this very expression, the insufficiency of every thing earthly to satisfy the mind; "but he that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Whoever is acquainted with the language of the ancient philosophers must see, that in these

expressions our Saviour meets their wishes: we do not mean to say, that they had or could have any right apprehensions of that preliminary abasement which the Scripture calls repentance, and which was put to them in possession of the rest and peace for which they sought, and which Christ does actually bestow. We do not mean to say, that the pride of unassisted nature could allow them to see that they were indeed objects of pure mercy on the part of God; and that their knowledge of themselves, or of him, could be such as to bring the real spirit of their wishes to any actual coincidence with the wonderful means which God, in his goodness, had devised to satisfy them. Though they did occasionally express a sense of an evil nature, and a wish for relief from it, yet who but the author of our religion ever met those wishes? In what other instance has a moral physician thus pledged himself to relieve agonised human nature? If there be no such instance, the conclusion is inevitable, — that Christianity, from the deep importance, as well as the unrivalled singularity of its overtures, justly claims our most serious enquiry, whether what has been thus promised has been actually accomplished.

Christianity has amply provided for this natural demand; for it has been ordered, that while the New Testament contains every principle necessary for the attainment of human happiness, it should also give us a perfect specimen of its own efficacy.

This we accordingly have in the fully-delineated character of the Apostle St. Paul. There is, per-

haps, no human person in all antiquity, of whose inmost feelings, as well as outward demeanour, we are so well enabled to judge, as of this great Christian teacher. The particulars respecting him in the Acts of the Apostles, compared with, and illustrated by, his own invaluable Epistles, make up a full-length portrait of him, in which no lineament is wanting. And the wisdom of God, in this single arrangement, has furnished a body of evidence in support both of the truth and the efficacy of our holy religion, which, when attentively examined, will ever satisfy the sincere, and silence the caviller.

The numberless minute and unobvious coincidences between the narrative and the Epistles have been so illustrated in a late invaluable work*, as to make the authenticity of both matter of absolute demonstration; and from such an instance of Christian influence, thus authenticated, the pretensions of Christianity itself may be brought to a summary and unequivocal test.

Was St. Paul, then, or was he not, an exemplification of that nobly-imagined wise man, which the heathen philosophers had pictured to themselves, as the height of human fecility? Does he appear to have found that rest, for which sages panted, and which his Divine Master purposed to bestow? Did he possess that virtuous and happy superiority to every thing earthly, sensual, and selfish, which was acknowledged to constitute the very essence of true philosophy? Let him that

* Paley's Horæ Paulinæ.

understands human nature read, and answer for himself. — Let him collect all that has been spoken on this subject by Socrates or Plato, by Cicero or Seneca, by Epictetus or Marcus Antoninus, and judge coolly, whether St. Paul does not substantially exemplify, and, I may add, infinitely out-do it all.

Horace has celebrated the fortitude of Regulus, in one of his most animated odes; but it may most soberly be asked, what was the fortitude of this Pagan hero, when compared with that which was unconsciously displayed by St. Paul in his way to Jerusalem? Regulus, we are told, would not turn his eyes toward his wife or his children. In his heroism, therefore, he sinks his humanity. Not so our Apostle; while he fears nothing for himself, he feels every thing for those around him. "What mean ye thus to weep, and to break my heart?" says he, "for I am ready, not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus." If this be not perfect magnanimity, where was it ever exhibited?

I will add but two instances: — one expressing the feelings which were habitual to himself; the other describing that perfection of goodness, which he wished to be pursued by others: and let the learned infidel find, if he can, a parallel for either. In speaking of himself, after acknowledging an act of friendship in those to whom he writes, he says, "Not as though I speak in respect of want; for I have learned in whatsover state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I

know how to abound. I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." What a testimonial this to the faithfulness of the offer of our Saviour, to which we have already referred! How consummately does it evince, that when he engaged to fulfil that deepest of human desires, the thirst of happiness, he promised no more than he was infinitely able to perform! The Apostle's exhortation to others is no less worthy of attention: — "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report — If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." In what human words did genuine moral feeling ever more completely embody itself? Are they not, as it were, the very soul and body of true philosophy? But what philosopher, before him, after such a lesson to his pupils, could have dared to add the words which immediately follow? — "The things which ye hath both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, *do*, and the God of peace shall be with you."

This is a most imperfect portion of that body of internal evidence, which even the most general view of Christianity presses on the attentive and candid mind; and with even this before us, may it not be boldly asked, what else like this has come within human knowledge? On these characters

of the Gospel, then, let the infidel fairly try his strength. Let him disprove, if he can, the correspondence between the wishes of philosophy and the achievements of Christianity, or destroy the identity of that common view of man's chief good and paramount happiness. Let him account, if he can, for these unexampled congruities, on any other ground than that of the truth of Christianity; or let him even plausibly elude the matter-of-fact evidence to this truth, which arises from St. Paul's character. In the mean time, let the pious Christian enjoy his sober triumph, in that system, which not in St. Paul only, but in all its true votaries, in every age and nation, it has produced — "a hope full of immortality," — "a peace which passeth all understanding," — "a wisdom pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

If any difficulty, attending particular doctrines of Christianity, should present itself, it will be well first to enquire, whether the doctrine in question be really Christian? and this can only be determined by a dispassionate and impartial recurrence to the Scriptures themselves, particularly the New Testament. Whatever is clearly asserted there, follows inevitably from the established divinity of that which contains it. And in what conceivable case can, not only humility, but rational consistency, be more wisely exercised, than in receiving, without question, the obvious parts? and then no doubt can be entertained respecting the whole. Happy had it

been for the Christian world, had this self-evident maxim been practically attended to; for then what dispute could possibly have risen about — "that Word which was made flesh, and dwelt among us, being also God over all, blessed for evermore?" Or whether the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in whose name we are baptized, must not be alike essentially divine? Or whether there can be any misconception in what the redeemed in heaven make the subject of their eternal song: "that the Lamb, which was slain, had redeemed them to God by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation?"

That plain and simple readers think they find each of these doctrines clearly set forth in the sacred volume, is a matter of fact authenticated by abundant evidence; and that, where they have been disputed, those who have agreed in holding them have evidently derived a deeper influence from Christianity, both as to the conduct of their lives and the comfort of their minds, than those who have rejected them, — if it could not be substantiated by innumerable proofs, would be almost self-evident, on a merely theoretic view of the two cases. For who ever derived either practical strength, or mental comfort, from indulging a habit of metaphysical disquisition? And who but such have, in any age of the church, questioned the doctrines of our Saviour's divinity, the threefold distinction in the divine nature, or the expiatory efficacy of Christ's *one oblation of himself, once offered for the sins of the whole world?*

The Scriptures are so explicit on the last-mentioned great doctrine of our religion, that we are not left to infer its truth and certainty, as we might almost do from the obvious exigencies of human nature. That guilt is one of the deepest of the natural feelings will not be disputed; and that the sense of guilt has been in every age and nation a source of the deepest horrors, and has suggested even still more horrible methods of appeasing the perturbed mind, can be questioned by none who is acquainted, however slightly, with the history of the world. Atheists in Pagan countries have made this very fact the great apology for their impiety, charging upon religion itself the dismal superstitions which appeared to them to arise from it; and Plutarch, one of the most enlightened of heathen moralists, concludes that even atheism itself is preferable to that superstitious dread of the gods, which he saw impelling so many wretched victims to daily and hourly self-torture. The fact is, no misery incident to man involves either greater depth or complication than that of a guilty conscience. And a system of religion which would have left this unprovided for, we may venture to pronounce would have been utterly unsuitable to man, and therefore utterly unworthy of the wisdom and goodness of God.

How appositely, then, to this awful feeling does the doctrine of the atonement come into the Christian system! How astonishingly has even its general belief chased from the Christian world those superstitious phantoms with which Paganism

ever has been, and even at this day is, haunted! But, above all, what relief has it afforded to the humble penitent! "This," said the pious Melancthon, "can only be understood in conflicts of conscience." It is most true. Let those, therefore, who have never felt such conflicts, beware how they despise what they may yet be impelled to resort to, as the only certain stay and prop of their sinking spirits. "It is a fearful thing," says an inspired writer, "to fall into the hands of the living God." Against this fear to what resource could we trust, but that which the mercy of God has no less clearly revealed to us? "Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest that is passed for us into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession; for we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need."

CHAP. XVII.

THE USE OF HISTORY IN TEACHING THE CHOICE OF FAVOURITES. — FLATTERY. — OUR TASTE IMPROVED IN THE ARTS OF ADULATION. — THE DANGERS OF FLATTERY EXEMPLIFIED.

It is not from the history of good princes alone that signal instruction may be reaped: the lives of the criminal and unfortunate, commonly unfortunate because criminal, will not be read in vain. They are instructive, not only by detailing the personal calamities with which the misconduct was followed, but by exhibiting that misconduct as the source of the alienation of the hearts of their subjects; and often as the remote, sometimes as the immediate, cause of civil commotions and of revolutions.

But caution is to be learned not from their vices only, but from their weaknesses and errors; from their false judgments, their ignorance of human nature, their narrow views arising from a bad education, their judging from partial information, deciding from infused prejudices, and acting on party principles; their being habituated to consider petty unconnected details, instead of taking in the great aggregate of public concerns; their imprudent choice of ministers, their unhappy spirit of favouritism, their preference of selfish flatterers to disinterested counsellors, and making the asso-

ciates of their pleasures the dispensers of justice and the ministers of public affairs.*

It is by that close acquaintance with the characters of men which history supplies, that a prince must learn how to avoid a jealous Sejanus, a vicious Tigellinus, a corrupt Spenser and Gavaston, a rapacious Empsom and Dudley, a pernicious D'Ancre, an ambitious Wolsey, a profligate Buckingham; we allude at once to the minister of the first James, and to the still more profligate Buckingham of the second Charles; a tyrannical Richelieu, a crafty Mazarin, a profuse Louvois, an intriguing Ursini, an inefficient Chamillard, an imperious Duchess of Marlborough, and a supple Masham.

History presents frequent instances of an inconsistency not uncommon in human nature, — sovereigns the most arbitrary to their subjects, themselves the tools of favourites. He who treated his people with disdain, and his parliaments with contempt, was, in turn, the slave of Arran, of Car, and of Villiers. His grandson, who boldly intrenched on the liberties of his country, was himself governed by the Cabal.

It may sound paradoxical to assert, that in a period of society when characters are less strongly marked, a sovereign is, in some respects, in more danger of choosing wrong. In our days, and

* The Romans seem to have had just ideas of the dignity of character and office attached to the friend of a prince, by denominating him, not favourite, but *particeps curarum*.

under our constitution, indeed, it is scarcely possible to err so widely as to select for ministers men of such atrocious characters as those who have just been held up to detestation. The very improvement of society, therefore, has caused the question to become one of a much nicer kind. It is no longer a choice between men whose outward characters exhibit a monstrous disproportion to each other. A bold oppressor of the people, the people would not endure. A violent infringer on the constitution, the parliament would not tolerate. But still out of that class from which the election must be made, the moral dispositions, the political tendencies, and the religious principles of men, may differ so materially, that the choice may seriously affect at once the credit and happiness of the prince, and the welfare of the country. The conduct of good and bad men will always furnish no inconsiderable means of distinction; yet, at a time when gross and palpable enormities are less likely to be obtruded, because they are less likely to be endured, it is the more necessary for a prince to be able accurately to discriminate the shades of the characters of public men.

While, therefore, every tendency to art or dissimulation should be reprobated, the most exact caution should be inculcated, and the keenest discernment cultivated, in the royal education. All that can improve the judgment, sharpen the penetration, or give enlarged views of the human mind, should be put in exercise. A prince should possess that sort of sight, which, while it takes in

remote views, accurately distinguishes near objects. To the eye of the lynx, which no minuteness can elude, should be added that of the eagle, which no brightness can blind, for whatever dazzles darkens. He should acquire that justness, as well as extent of mind, which should enable him to study the character of his enemies, and decide upon that of his friends; to penetrate keenly, but not invidiously, into the designs of others, and vigilantly to scrutinise his own. His mind should be stored, not with shifts and expedients, but with large and liberal plans; not with stratagems, but resources; not with subterfuges, but principles; not with prejudices, but reasons. He should treasure up sound maxims to teach him to act consistently; be provided with steady measures suited to the probable occasion, together with a promptitude of mind, prepared to vary them so as to meet any contingency.

In no instance will those who have the care of forming the royal pupil find a surer exercise of their wisdom and integrity than in their endeavours to guard the mind from the deadly poison of flattery. "Many kings," says the witty South, "have been destroyed by poison, but none has been so efficaciously mortal as that drunk in by the ear."

Intellectual taste, it is true, is much refined, since the Grecian sophist tried to cure the melancholy of Alexander by telling him, that "Justice was painted, as seated near the throne

of Jupiter, to indicate that right and wrong depended on the will of kings: all whose actions ought to be accounted just, both by themselves and others."

Compliments are not now absurd and extravagant as when the most elegant of Roman poets invited his imperial master to pick out his own lodging among the constellations: nor, as when the bard of Pharsalia offered to the Emperor his choice, either of the sceptre of Jupiter, or the chariot of Apollo; modestly assuring him, that there was not a god in the pantheon who would not yield his empire to him, and account it an honour to resign in his favour. This meritorious prince, so worthy to displace the gods, was Nero! who rewarded Lucan, not for his adulation, but for being a better poet than himself, with a violent death.

The smooth and obsequious Pliny improved on all anterior adulation. Not content with making his emperor the imitator, or the equal of Deity, he makes him a pattern for it; protesting that "men needed to make no other prayers to the gods, than that they would continue to be as good and propitious lords to them as Trajan had been."

But the refined sycophant of modern days is more likely to hide the actual blemishes, and to veil the real faults of a prince from himself, than to attribute to him incredible virtues, the ascription of which would be too gross to impose on his discernment. There will be more danger

of a modern courtier imitating the delicacy of the ancient painter, who, being ordered to draw the portrait of a prince who had but one eye, adopted the conciliating expedient of painting him in profile.

But if the modern flatterer be less gross, he will be, on that very account, the more dangerous. The refinement of his adulation prevents the object of it from putting himself on his guard. The prince is led, perhaps, to conceive, with self-complacency, that he is hearing the language of truth, while he is only the dupe of a more accomplished flatterer. He should especially beware of mistaking freedom of manner for frankness of sentiment; and of confounding the artful familiarities of a designing favourite with the honest simplicity of a disinterested friend.

Where, in our more correct day, is the courtier, who would dare to add profaneness to flattery so far as to declare, as was done by the greatest philosopher this country ever produced, in his letter to Prince Charles, that, "as the father had been his creator, so he hoped the son would be his redeemer?"* But what a noble contrast to this base and blasphemous servility in the Chancellor of James does the conduct of the Chancellor of his grandson exhibit! The unbending rectitude of Clarendon not only disdained to flatter, in his private intercourse, a master to whom, however, his pen is always too partial, but

* See Howell's Letters.

it led him boldly and honestly to remonstrate against his flagitious conduct. A standing example for all times, to the servants and companions of kings, he resolutely reproved his master to his face, while he thought it his duty to defend him, somewhat too strongly indeed, to others. He boldly besought the King, "not to believe that he had a prerogative to declare vice to be virtue." And in one of the noblest speeches on record, in answer to a dishonourable request of the King, that he would visit some of His Majesty's infamous associates, he laid before him, with a lofty sincerity, "the turpitude of a man in his dignified office being obliged to countenance persons scandalous for their vices, for which, by the laws of God and man, they ought to be odious, and exposed to the judgment of the church and state."—In this instance superior to his great rival Sully, that no desire of pleasing the King, no consideration of *expediency*, could induce him to visit the royal mistresses, or to countenance the licentious favourites.

Princes have generally been greedy of praise in a pretty exact proportion to the pains which they have taken not to deserve it. Henry the Eighth was a patron of learned men, and might himself be accounted learned. But his favourite studies, instead of preserving him from the love of flattery, served to lay him open to it. Scholastic divinity, the fashionable learning of the times, as Burnet observes, suited his vain and contentious temper, and as ecclesiastics were to be his critics, his

pursuits of polemical theology brought him in the largest revenue of praise; so that there seemed to be a contest between him and them, whether they could offer, or he could swallow, the most copious draughts of flattery.

But the reign of James the First was the great epocha of adulation in England; and a prince who had not one of the qualities of a warlike, and scarcely one of the virtues of a pacific, king, received from clergy and laity, from statesmen, philosophers, and men of letters, praises not only utterly repugnant to truth and virtue, but directly contrary to that frankness of manners and magnanimity of spirit which had formerly characterised Englishmen. This ascription of all rights, and all talents, and all virtues, to a prince bold through fear, and presumptuous because he wished to conceal his own pusillanimity, rebounded, as was but just, on the flatterers; who, in return for their adulation, were treated by him with a contempt which not the boldest of his predecessors had ever ventured to manifest. His enquiry of his company at dinner, whether he might not take his subjects' money when he needed it, without the formality of parliament, indicates, that one object was always uppermost in his mind*: his familiar intercourse was employed in diving into the private opinions of men,

* The requisition was allowed in a phrase as disgustingly servile, by Bishop Neile, as it was pleasantly evaded by Andrews.

to discover to what length his oppressive schemes might be carried; and his public conduct occupied in putting those schemes into practice.

But the royal person whom we presume to advise, may, from the very circumstance of her sex, have more complicated dangers to resist; against which her mind should be early fortified. The dangers of adulation are doubled, when the female character is combined with the royal. Even the vigorous mind of the great Elizabeth did not guard her against the powerful assaults of the flattery paid to her person. That masculine spirit was as much the slave of the most egregious vanity, as the weakest of her sex could have been. All her admirable prudence and profound policy could not preserve her from the childish and silly levity with which she greedily invited the compliments of the artful minister of her more beautiful rival. Even that gross instance of Melville's extravagance enchanted her, when, as she was playing on Mary's favourite instrument, for the purpose of being over-heard by him, the dissembling courtier affected to be so ravished by her skill, as to burst into her apartment, like an enraptured man, who had forgotten his reverence in his admiration. It was a curious combat in the great mind of Elizabeth, between the offended pride of the queen and the gratified vanity of the woman; but Melville knew his trade in knowing human nature:—he calculated justly. The woman conquered.

Princes have in all ages complained that they

have been ill served. But, is it not because they have not always carefully selected their servants? Is it not because they have too often bestowed confidence on the unwise, and employments on the unworthy? Because, while they have loaded the undeserving with benefits, they have neglected to reward those who have served them well, and to support those who have served them long? Is it not because they have sometimes a way of expecting every thing, while they seem to exact nothing? And have not too many been apt to consider that the honour of serving them is itself a sufficient reward?

By a close study of the weaknesses and passions of a sovereign, crafty and designing favourites have ever been on the watch to establish their own dominion, by such appropriate means as seem best accommodated to the turn of those weaknesses and passions. If Leonore Concini and the Duchess of Marlborough obtained the most complete ascendency over their respective queens, both probably by artful flattery at first, they afterwards secured and preserved it by a tyranny the most absolute. In connections of this nature, it is usually on the side of the sovereign that the caprice and the haughtiness are expected; but the domineering favourite of Anne exclusively assumed to herself all these prerogatives of despotic power, and exercised them without mercy, on the intimidated and submissive queen; a queen who, with many virtues, not having had the discernment to find out that the opposite extreme to what is wrong is

commonly wrong also, in order to extricate herself from her captivity to one favourite, fell into the snares spread for her by the servility of another. Thus, whether the imperious Duchess or the obsequious Masham were lady of the ascendant, the sovereign was equally infatuated, equally misled.

That attachments formed without judgment, and pursued without moderation, are likely to be dissolved without reason, and that breaches the most trivial in themselves may be important in their consequences, were never more fully exemplified than in the trifling cause which, by putting an end to the intercourse between the above-named queen and duchess, produced events the most unforeseen and extraordinary. While the Duke was fighting her Majesty's battles abroad, and his duchess supporting his interest against a powerful party at court, a pair of gloves of a new invention, sent first by the milliner to the favourite, (impatient to have them before the queen, who had ordered a similar pair,) so incensed her Majesty as to be the immediate cause, by driving the Duchess from her post, of depriving the Duke of his command, compelling the confederates to agree to a peace, preserving Louis from the destruction which awaited him, making a total revolution in parties at home, and determining the fate of Europe.*

To a monarch more eager to acquire fame than to deserve it, to pension a poet will be a shorter

* Examen du Prince.

cut to renown than to dispense blessings to his country. Louis XII., instead of buying immortality of a servile bard, earned and enjoyed the appellation of *Father of his people;* that people whom his brilliant successor, Louis the *Great*, drained and plundered, or, in the emphatic language of the prophet, *peeled and scattered*, to provide money for his wars, his mistresses, his buildings, and his spectacles. Posterity, however, has done justice to both kings, and *le bien-aimé* is remembered with affectionate veneration, while *le grand* is regarded as the fabricator of the ruin of his race.

How totally must adulation have blunted the delicacy of the latter prince, when he could shut himself up with his two royal historiographers, Boileau and Racine, to hear them read portions of his own history! Deservedly high as was the reputation of these two fine geniuses in the walks of poetry, was that history likely to convey much truth or instruction to posterity, which, after being composed by two pensioned poets, was read by them to the monarch who was to be the hero of the tale? Sovereigns, indeed, may elect poets to record their exploits, but subjects will read historians.

The conquest of every town and village was celebrated by Boileau in hyperbolic song, and the whole pantheon ransacked for deities, who might furnish some faint idea of the glories of the immortal Louis. The time, however, soon arrived, when the author of the adulatory ode on the taking

of Namur, in which the King and the gods were again identified, was as completely overturned by the incomparable travesty of our witty Prior, as the conqueror of Namur himself was by its glorious deliverer —

> Little Will, the scourge of France,
> No godhead, but the first of men. *

A prince should be accustomed to see and know things as they really are, and should be taught to dread that state of delusion in which the monarch is the only person ignorant of what is doing in his kingdom. It was to little purpose that the sovereign last named, when some temporary sense of remorse was excited, by an affecting representation of the miseries of the persecuted Protestants, said, "that he hoped God would not impute to him as a crime, punishments which he had not commanded." Delusive hope! It was crime enough for a king to be ignorant of what was passing in his dominions.

There have been few princes so ill disposed as not to have been made worse by unmeasured flattery. Even some of the most depraved Roman emperors began their career with a fair promise. Tiberius set out with being mild and prudent, and even Nero, for a considerable time, either wore the mask, or did not need it. While his two virtuous friends maintained their entire influence, every thing looked favourable; but when his syco-

* See Boileau's Ode sur la Prise de Namur by Louis, and Prior's Poem on the Taking of Namur by King William.

phants had succeeded in making Seneca an object of ridicule, and when Tigellinus was preferred to Burrhus, all that followed was a natural consequence. The abject slavery of the people, the servile decrees of the senate, the obsequious acquiescence of the court, the prostrate homage of every order, all concurred to bring out his vices in their full luxuriance; and Rome, as was but just, became the victim of the monster she had pampered. Tacitus, with his usual honest indignation, declares, that as often as the emperor commanded banishments or ordered assassinations, so often were thanks and sacrifices decreed to the gods!

But, in our happier days, as subjects, it is presumed, indulge no such propensities, so, under our happier constitution, have they no such opportunities. Yet powerful, though gentler, and almost unapparent, means, may be employed to weaken the virtue and injure the fame of a prince. To degrade his character, he need only be led into one vice, idleness, and be attacked by one weapon, flattery. Indiscriminate acquiescence and soothing adulation will lay his mind open to the incursion of every evil, without his being aware of it; for his table is not the place where he expects to meet an enemy; consequently, he is not on his guard against him. And where he is thus powerfully assailed, the kindest nature, the best intentions, the gentlest manners, and the mildest dispositions, cannot be depended on for preserving him from those very corruptions to which the

worst propensities lead; and there is a degree of facility, which, from softness of temper, becomes imbecility of mind.

For there is hardly a fault a sovereign can commit to which flattery may not incline him. It impels to opposite vices; to apathy and egotism, the natural failings of the great; to ambition which inflames the heart; to anger which distorts it; to hardness which deadens, and to selfishness which degrades it. He should be taught, as the intrepid Masillon * taught his youthful prince, that the flattery of the courtier, contradictory as the assertion may seem, is little less dangerous than the disloyalty of the rebel. Both would betray him; and the crime of him who would dethrone, and of him who would debase, his prince, however they may differ in a political, differ but little in a moral view; nay, the ill effects of the traitor's crime may, to the prince at least, be bounded by time, while the consequences of the flatterer's may extend to eternity.

* See Masillon's Sermons; abounding equally in the sublimest piety and the richest eloquence.

CHAP. XVIII.

RELIGION NECESSARY TO THE WELL-BEING OF STATES.

THE royal pupil should be informed, that there are some half Christians and half philosophers, who wish, without incurring the discredit of renouncing religion, to strip it of its value, by lowering its usefulness. They have been at much pains to produce a persuasion, that however beneficial Christianity may be to individuals, and however properly it may be taken as the rule of their conduct, it cannot be safely brought into action in political concerns; that the intervention of its spirit will rarely advance the public good, but, on the contrary, will often necessarily obstruct it; and in particular, that the glory and elevation of states must be unavoidably attended with some violation even of those laws of morality, which, they allow, ought to be observed in other cases.*

These assertions, respecting the political disadvantages of religion, have not been urged merely by the avowed enemies of Christian principle, the Bolingbrokes, the Hobbes's, and the Gibbons: but there is a more sober class of sceptics, ranged

* It were to be wished that Cromwell had been the only ruler who held, that the rules of morality must be dispensed with on great political occasions.

under the banners of a very learned and ingenious sophist*, who have not scrupled to maintain, that the author of Christianity has actually forbidden us to improve the condition of this world, to take any vigorous steps for preventing its misery, or advancing its glory. Another writer, an elegant wit, but whimsical and superficial, though doubtless a sincere Christian †, who would be shocked at the excess to which impiety has carried the position, has yet afforded some countenance to it, by intimating, that God has given to men a religion which is incompatible with the whole economy of that world which he has created, and in which he has thought proper to place them. He allows, that "government is essential to men, and yet asserts, that it cannot be managed without certain degrees of violence, corruption, and imposition, which yet Christianity strictly forbids. That perpetual patience under injuries must every day provoke new insults and injuries, yet is this," says he, "*enjoined.*"

The same positions are also repeatedly affirmed, by a later, more solid, and most admirable writer, whose very able defence of the divine authority of Christianity and the Holy Scriptures naturally obtains credit for any opinions which are honoured with his support.

* Mr. Bayle.

† Soame Jenyns. It is true, he puts the remark in the mouth of "refined and speculative observers;" but he afterwards affirms, in his own person, *that such is indeed the Christian Revelation.*

It may be expected, that those who advance such propositions should at least produce proofs from history, that those states, in the government of which Christian principles have been most conspicuous, other circumstances being equal, have either failed through error, or sunk through impotence; or in some other way have suffered from introducing principles into transactions to which they were inapplicable.

But how little the avowed sceptic, or even the paradoxical Christian, seems to understand the genius of our religion; and how erroneous is their conception of the true elementary principles of political prosperity, we learn from one, who was as able as either to determine on the case. He who was not only a politician but a king, and eminently acquainted with the duties of both characters, has assured us, that RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION. And does not every instinct of the unsophisticated heart, and every clear result of dispassionate and enlarged observation, unite in adopting as a moral axiom this divinely-recorded aphorism?

It would, indeed, be strange, if the great Author of all things had admitted such an anomaly in his moral government; if in direct contradiction to that moral ordination of causes and effects, by which, in the case of individuals, religion and virtue generally tend, in the way of natural consequence, to happiness and prosperity, irreligion and vice, to discomfiture and misery, the Almighty should have established the directly opposite tendencies, in the case of those multiplications of indi-

viduals, which are called civil communities. It is a supposition so contrary to the divine procedure, in every other instance, that it would require to be proved by incontestable evidence. It would indeed amount to a concession, that the moral Author of the world had appointed a premium, as it were, for vice and irreligion; the very idea is profaneness. Happily, it is clearly contrary also both to reason and experience. Providence, the ordinations of which will ever exhibit marks of wisdom and goodness, in proportion to the care with which they are explored, has in this instance, as well as in others, made our duty coincident with our happiness, has furnished us with an additional motive for pursuing that course, which is indispensable to our eternal welfare, by rendering it, in the case both of individuals and of communities, productive also of temporal good. It was not enough to make the paths of virtue lead to "the fulness of joy" hereafter; they are even now rendered, to those who walk in them, "paths of pleasantness and peace."

It would not be difficult to prove, by a reference to the most established principles of human nature, that those dispositions of mind and principles of conduct, which, both directly and indirectly, tend to promote the good order of civil communities, are, in general, produced or strengthened by religion. The same temper of mind which disposes a man to fear God prompts him to honour the king. The same pride, self-sufficiency, and impatience of control, which are

commonly the root and origin of impiety, naturally produce civil insubordination and discontent. One of the most acute of our political writers has stated, that all government rests on *opinion*; on the opinion entertained by the mass of the people, of *the right to power* in their governors, or on the opinion of its being *their own interest to obey*. Now religion naturally confirms both these principles, and thereby strengthens the very foundations of the powers of government. It establishes the *right to power* of governors, by teaching, that "there is no power but of God;" it confirms in subjects the sense of its being *their interest to obey*, by the powerful intervention of its higher sanctions and rewards: "they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation."

Religion teaches men to consider their lot in life as a station assigned to them by Him who has a right to dispose of his creatures as he will. It therefore tends to prevent, in the great mass of the community, which must ever be, comparatively speaking, poor, the disposition to repine at the more favoured lot and superior comforts of the higher orders; a disposition which is the real source of the most dangerous and deadly dissensions.

Religion, again, as prompting men to view all human events as under the divine direction, to regard the evils of life as the dispensation of heaven, and often as capable of being rendered conducive to the most essential and lasting benefit, disposes men to bear all their sufferings with

resignation and cheerfulness. Whereas, on the contrary, they who are not under its power, are often inclined to revenge on their rulers the misfortunes which unavoidably result from natural causes, as well as those which may be more reasonably supposed to have owed their existence to human imprudence and actual misconduct.

Again, if from contemplating these questions in their principles and elements, we proceed to view them, as they have been exhibited and illustrated by history and experience, we shall find the same positions established with equal clearness and force. Is there any proposition more generally admitted, than that political communities tend to decay and dissolution in proportion to the corruption of their morals? How often has the authority of the poet been adduced (an author acute and just in his views of life, but not eminent for being the friend of morals or religion,) to prove the inefficacy of laws to avert the progress of a state's decline and fall, while it should be carried forward, too surely, in the downward road, by the general corruption of manners. We have already exemplified these truths, in enumerating the causes of the fall of Rome.* On more than one occasion, that state had owed its preservation to its reverence for the awful sanction of an oath. This principle, and, indeed, the duty which is so closely connected with it, of truth and general fidelity to engagements, are the very cement which holds together societies, and, indeed, all, whether greater or smaller, asso-

* Chap. viii.

ciations of men; and that this class of virtues is founded and bottomed on religion, is undeniably evident.

If we pass from the page of history to a review of private life, are we not led to exactly the same conclusions? Where do the politicians, who reason from the evidence of facts, expect to find a spirit of insubordination and anarchy? Is it not in our crowded cities, in our large manufacturing towns, where wealth is often too dearly purchased at the price of morality and virtue? And if we resort to individual instances, who is the man of peace and quietness? Who is the least inclined to "meddle with them that are given to change?" Is it not the man of religious and domestic habits; whose very connections, pursuits, and hopes, are so many pledges for his adherence to the cause of civil order, and to the support of the laws and institutions of his country?

It is the more extraordinary that any writers, not deliberately hostile to the cause of religion and virtue, should have given any degree of countenance to the pernicious error which we have been so long combating; because the opposite opinion has been laid down, as an incontestable axiom, by those who will not be suspected of any extravagant zeal for the credit of religion, but, who speak the dictates of strong sense and deep observation. Hear, then, the able but profligate Machiavel: — "Those princes and commonwealths, who would keep their governments entire and uncorrupt, are above all things to have a care of religion and its

ceremonies, and preserve them in due veneration; for, in the whole world, there is not a greater sign of imminent ruin, than when God and his worship are despised." — "A prince, therefore, ought most accurately to regard, that his religion be well founded, and then his government will last; for there is no surer way, than to keep that good and united. Whatever, therefore, occurs, that may any way be extended to the advantages and reputation of the religion they design to establish, by all means, they are to be propagated and encouraged; and the wiser the prince, the more sure it is to be done." — "And if this care of divine worship were regarded by Christian princes, according to the precepts and instructions of Him who gave it at first, the states and commonwealths of Christendom would be much more happy and firm." *

Machiavel, it will be said, was at once an infidel and a hypocrite, who did not believe the truth of that religion the observance of which he solicitously enforced. Be it so: it still deducts nothing from the force of the argument as to the political uses of religion. — For, if the mere forms and institutions, "the outward and visible signs" of Christianity, were acknowledged to be, as they really are, of so great value, by this shrewd politician, what might not be the effect of its "inward and spiritual grace?"

When two able men of totally opposite principles and characters pointedly agree on any one import-

* Machiavel's Discourses on Livy.

ant topic, there is a strong presumption that they meet in a truth. Such an unlooked-for conformity may be found in two writers so decidedly opposite to each other, as our incomparable Bishop Butler, and the Florentine secretary above cited. Who will suspect Butler of being a visionary enthusiast? Yet has he drawn a most beautiful picture of the happiness of an imaginary state, which should be perfectly virtuous for a succession of ages. "In such a state," he insists, "there would be no faction. Public determinations would really be the result of united wisdom. All would contribute to the general prosperity, and each would enjoy the fruits of his own virtue. Injustice, force, and fraud, would be unknown. — Such a kingdom would influence the whole earth: the *head* of it would, indeed, be a universal monarch, in a new sense, and *all people, nations, and languages should serve him.*" *

The profound Butler was, indeed, too great an adept in the knowledge of human nature, and too thoroughly versed in the whole history of mankind, not to know, as he afterwards observes, the impossibility, without some miraculous interposition, that a great body of men should so unite in one nation and government, in the fear of God, and the practice of virtue; and that such a government should continue unbroken for a succession of ages;

* This is only a short abstract of this fine passage, to the whole of which the reader is referred. Butler's Analogy, part first, chap. iii. p. 89. and following.

yet, supposing it could be so, such, he affirms, would be the certain effect. And may we not also ask, even allowing for all the failings and imperfections of human nature, which the prelate has excluded from his hypothesis, would not a state really approach nearer to this supposed happiness, in proportion as it taught and practised with more sedulity the principles of religion and virtue?

We cordially agree, indeed, with the famous Cosmo di Medici, that princes cannot govern their states by "counting a string of beads, or mumbling over Paternosters." But we are, at the same time, equally averse from the religion which assigns such practices to any class of people; and from that ignorance which would make the religion of any order of men, especially of princes, consist in mere ceremonies and observances. Charles the Wise was at least as sound a judge as Cosmo, of what constituted the perfection of a royal character, when he declared, that, "if there were no honour and virtue left in the rest of the world, the last traces of them should be found among princes." There should, indeed, be found in the royal character an innate grandeur; a dignity of soul which should show itself under all circumstances, and shine through every cloud of trial or difficulty. It was from such inherent marks of greatness, that the infant Cyrus, exiled and unknown, was chosen king by the shepherd's children.

It would not, perhaps, be easy to cite a higher authority on the point in question, the importance

of religion to a state, than that of the great and excellent Chancellor de L'Hôpital. It was a common observation of his, that "religion had more influence upon the spirits of mankind than all their passions put together; and that the cement, by which it united them, was infinitely stronger than all the other obligations of civil society." This was not the observation of a dreaming monk, who, in his cell, writes maxims for a world of which he knows nothing; but the sentiment derived from deep experience of an illustrious statesman, whose greatness of mind, zeal, disinterestedness, and powerful talents, supported France under a succession of weak and profligate kings. Frugal for the state in times of boundless prodigality; philosophical in a period of enthusiastic fury; tolerant and candid in days of persecution, and deeply conscientious under all circumstances; worthy, in short, and it is perhaps his best eulogium, to be driven, for his virtues, by Catherine di Medici from counsels which his wisdom might have controlled; and who, on giving up the seals which she demanded, withdrew to an honourable literary retreat, with the remark, that "the world was too depraved for him to concern himself any longer with it." These are the men whom corrupt princes drive from the direction of those states, which their wisdom might save, and their virtue might reform.

Another of the political advantages of religious rectitude in a state, is the *security* it affords. For, with whatever just severity we may reprobate the general spirit of revolution, yet, it must be con-

fessed, that it has not, on *all* occasions, been excited by undue discontent, by unprovoked impatience, nor even by selfish personal feelings; but sometimes also from a virtuous sense of the evils of oppression and injustice; evils which honest men resent for others as well as for themselves.

Again, there is something so safe and tranquillising in Christian piety, as we have already observed, that, though we would be far from reducing it to a cold political calculation, yet, content submission, and obedience, make so large a practical part of religion, that, wherever it is taught in the best and soundest way, it can hardly fail to promote, in the people, the ends of true policy, any more than of genuine morality.

Our wisest sovereigns, partly, perhaps, for this reason, have paid the deepest attention to the moral instruction of the lower classes of their subjects. Alfred and Elizabeth *, among others,

* See a letter of Archbishop Whitgift to the bishops, of which the following is an extract: —

" Your Lordship is not ignorant, that a great part of the dissoluteness of manners, and ignorance in the common sort, that reigneth in most parts of this realm, even in this clear light of the Gospel, ariseth hereof, for that the youth, being as it were the frie and seminary of the church and commonwealth, through negligence, both of natural and spiritual fathers, are not, as were meet, trained up in the chief and necessary principles of Christian religion, whereby they might learn their duty to their God, their prince, their country, and their neighbours; especially in their tender years, when these things might best be planted in them, and would become most hardly to be afterwards removed. This mischief might well, in mine opinion, be redressed, if that which in this behalf hath

were too sound politicians to lose this powerful hold on the affections of their people. In addition to their desire to promote religion, they had no doubt discerned, that it is gross vice, that it is brutal ignorance, which leave the lower class a prey to factious innovators, and render them the blind tools of political incendiaries. When the youth of this class are carefully instructed in religion by their rightful teachers, those teachers have the fairest opportunities of instilling into them their duty to the state, as well as to the church; and they will find that the same lessons which form good Christians tend to make good subjects. But, without that moderate measure of sound and sober instruction, which should be judiciously adapted to their low demands, they will be likely neither to honour the king, reverence the clergy, nor obey the magistrate. While, on the contrary, by interweaving their duty to their governors with their duty to God, they will at once be preserved from mischief in politics, and delusion in religion. The awful increase of perjury among us is of itself a loud call sedulously to pursue this object. How should those, who are not early instructed in the know-

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been godly and wisely provided, were as carefully called on and executed, namely, by catechising and instructing in churches the youth of both sexes, on the Sabbath-days, in the afternoon. And that, if it may be convenient, before their parents, and others of the several parishes, who thereby may take comfort and instruction also." *Strype's Life of Whitgift.*

ledge of their Maker, fear to offend him, by that common violation of the solemnity of oaths for which we are unhappily becoming notorious? Let us not be deemed needlessly earnest in the defence of a truth of such extreme importance. The political value of religion never can be too firmly believed, or too carefully kept in view, in the government of nations. May it be deeply rooted in the mind of every prince, as a fundamental principle! Let it be confirmed by all the various proofs and examples by which its truth can be established, and its authority enforced! *

But to return. — We most readily concede, that by that exaltation of a state of which Solomon speaks, is not meant that sudden flash of temporary splendour which is occasioned by the mutable advantages of war, the plunder of foreign countries, the acquisition of unwieldy territory, or the vertigo of domestic revolutions; but that sober and solid glory, which is the result of just laws: of agricul-

* Mr. Addison speaks of the religious instruction of the poor as the best means of recovering the country from its degeneracy and depravation of manners. And, after drawing an animated picture of a procession of charity children on a day of thanksgiving for the triumphs obtained by the Queen's arms, he adds, "For my part, I can scarce forbear looking on the astonishing victories our arms have been crowned with to be, in some measure, the blessings returned upon these charities; and that the great successes of the war, for which we lately offered up our thanks, were, in some measure, occasioned by the several objects (of religiously-instructed children) which then stood before us. *Guardian*, No. 105. *These were the sentiments of a secretary of state!*

ture and sobriety, which promote population; of industry and commerce, which increase prosperity; of such well-regulated habits in private life as may serve to temper that prosperity, and, by strict consequences, give direction and steadiness to public manners. For it never can be made a question, whether the solidity of the parts must not contribute to the firmness of the whole; and whether the virtue exercised by collective bodies can any farther be hoped for, than as it exists in the individuals who compose them. But on what basis can this superstructure rest, by what principle can individual virtue be either substantially promoted, or lastingly secured, except by that sense of an invisible, almighty, and infinitely just, and holy Sovereign of the universe, which Revelation alone has effectually disclosed to us, and reason has recognised as the essence of religion?

Far be it, indeed, from us to deny, that this religious principle may not frequently oppose itself to *apparent* means of aggrandisement, both personal and national. Doubtless it will often condemn that to which human pride would aspire. Even when an object might in itself be fairly desirable, it will forbid the pursuit, except through lawful paths. But, in the severest of such restrictions, it only sacrifices what is shadowy to what is substantial, the evanescent triumphs of a day to the permanent comfort of successive generations.

But, though we do not assert that national prosperity is always, and infallibly, an indication of virtue, and of the distinguishing favour of God,

yet we conceive, that such outward marks of the divine favour may more generally be expected, in the case of communities, than of individuals. In communities we see not so much the effect of each particular act of virtue, as of the generally-diffused principle. Though virtue is often obstructed in labouring to obtain for itself the advantages which belong to it, this is no proof against its having a tendency to obtain them; the natural tendency, indeed, being to produce happiness, though it may fail to do it in certain excepted cases.

In the case, therefore, of communities and states, where the result of *many* actions, rather than the particular effect of *each*, is seen, it may not altogether unfairly be asserted, that virtue is its own reward. Perhaps it also may be affirmed, that the system of temporal rewards and punishments, which, though chiefly exemplified in the Jewish dispensation, was by no means confined to it, has not equally passed away, with respect to states and nations, as with respect to individuals. The learned Bossuet has observed, that while the New Testament manifests to us the operation of God's grace, the Old Testament exhibits to us his providential government of the world. We will not dwell on this remark further than to suggest, that even in this view the study of the Old Testament may not be without its uses, even to the modern statesman, as we know that the Jewish law has clearly been held important by some of our wisest legislators.

On the whole, we need not hesitate to assert, that, in the long course of events, nothing that is

morally wrong can be politically right; nothing that is inequitable can be finally successful; nothing that is contrary to religion can be ultimately favourable to civil policy. We may therefore confidently affirm, that impiety and vice, sooner or later, bring states, as well as individuals, to misery and ruin. That, though vice may sometimes contribute to temporary exaltation, in the same degree it will, in the end, contribute to promote decay, and accelerate the inevitable period of dissolution.

Let it, then, be ever kept in view, that the true exaltation is, in fact, that prosperity which arises from the goodness of the laws, and the firmness and impartiality with which they are executed; which results from moderation in the government, and obedience in the people; from wisdom and foresight in council, from activity and integrity in commerce, from independence of national character, from fortitude in resisting foreign attack, and zeal in promoting domestic harmony; from patience under sufferings, hardiness in danger, zeal in the love of civil, and vigour in the reprobation of savage, liberty; from a spirit of fairness and liberality in making treaties, and from fidelity in observing them. Above all, from a multiplication of individual instances of family comfort and independence; from the general prevalence, throughout the great mass of the people, of habits of industry, sobriety, and good order; from the practice, in short, of the social and domestic virtues; of all those relative duties and kindnesses, which give

body and substance to the various charities of life, and the best feelings of our nature.

If sinful nations appear prosperous for a time, it is often because there has been some proportion of good mixed with the evil; or it is because the Providence of God means to use the temporary success of guilty nations for the accomplishment of his general scheme, or the promotion of a particular purpose, of humbling and correcting other, perhaps, less guilty nations; or it is because "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full;" and the punishment of the more corrupt states is delayed, to make their ruin more signal and tremendous, and their downfall a more portentous object, for the instruction of the world. God, without any impeachment of his moral government, may withhold retribution, because it is always in his power: he may be long-suffering, because he is everlasting. He may permit the calamity which we see, in order to extract from it the good which we see not. He is never the author of moral evil; and the natural evil, which he does authorise, is both the punishment and the corrective of the moral. Though God never intended this world for such a complete state of retribution, as entirely to hinder either vice or virtue from occasionally receiving the recompenses and the penalties due to the other, yet there is this obvious difference, between nations and individuals, that whereas individuals the most virtuous are often the most visited with temporal misfortunes, the best-governed empires are, on the whole, the most secure of prosperity.

And if, in the calamities brought on corrupt states, the innocent always, unavoidably, suffer with the guilty, this furnishes no just charge against the equity of Divine Providence, who *here* reckons tremendously with the state *as* a state, but will, separately and ultimately, reckon with every individual; and thus finally and fully vindicate his own infinite and much-calumniated justice.*

* See Bishop Butler's Analogy, — a work which cannot be too strongly recommended.

CHAP. XIX.

INTEGRITY THE TRUE POLITICAL WISDOM.

The tendency of a religious temper to exalt a prince into a hero, might be sufficiently illustrated by the single instance of Louis the Ninth. It is notorious, that nothing more severely tries the character of princes, as well as of individuals, than remarkable success. It was, however, in this circumstance precisely, that the prince just mentioned evinced how completely his Christian temper had corrected both the selfishness natural to man, and the arrogance habitual to prosperity.

When, under the unfortunate reign of our Henry the Third, the affairs of England were reduced to a low condition, while those of France were in a highly flourishing state, Louis, in making a treaty with England, generously refused to take an unfair advantage of the misfortunes of this country, or to avail himself to the utmost of his own superiority. His concessions to the depressed enemy were liberal; and he soon after reaped the reward of his moderation, in the confidence which it inspired. Louis was chosen, both by Henry and his nobles, to settle the differences between them. In consequence of the recent instance of his public integrity, the foreign adversary was invited to be the arbiter of domestic disagreements; and they were happily terminated by his decision. Let in-

fidels remark, to the disgrace of their scepticism, that the monarch who was, perhaps, one of the greatest instances of Christian piety and devotion, furnished also an example of the most striking moral rectitude!

Henry the Fourth, when only king of Navarre, discovered no less integrity after his glorious victory at Coutras. Being asked what terms he would require from the king of France, after gaining such a victory, "Just the same," replied he, "that I should ask after losing one."

It is, however, necessary to observe, that integrity, in order to be successful, must be uniform. Truth, for example, occasionally spoken, may not afford to the speaker any part of the profit which attends the regular observance of truth. The error of corrupt politicians consists much in treating each question as if it were an insulated case, and then arguing, perhaps not unjustly, that the practice of virtue, in this or that particular instance, will not be productive of good; forgetting that if, in all instances, they would be virtuous, they would then, most probably, obtain the success and full reward of virtue.

We know that even in that particular branch of political transactions, the diplomatic, wherein the strongest temptations to dissimulation and chicanery are held forth to little minds, some of the most able and successful negotiators have generously disdained the use of any such mean expedients. The frankness and integrity of Temple and De Wit are not more esteemed by the moralist

for their probity, than by the statesman for their true wisdom. What can there be, indeed, so different between the situation of two public men, who, on the part of their several countries respectively, are negotiating on questions of policy or commerce, and that of two private men who are treating on some business of ordinary life, which should render impolitic, in the public concern, that honesty which, in the private, is so universally acknowledged to be the best policy, as to have grown into an adage of universal and unqualified acceptance? Indeed, as the adage may refer to what is truly politic in the long run, and with a view to general consequences, we might rather expect, that fraud would be admissible into the transactions of private men, whose short span of life might not be likely to be more than counterbalanced by future loss, rather than in the concerns of states, which, by containing a long-continued existence, a political identity, under all the successive generations of the members of which they are composed, may pay, and pay, perhaps, severely too, in later times, the price of former acts of fraud and treachery. — Again, in public, no less than in private business, will not any one find the benefit of employing an agent who possesses a high character for probity and honour? Will not larger and more liberal concessions be made to him who may be safely relied on for paying their equivalent? Once more, how often are public wars, as well as private differences, produced or fermented by mutual distrust! and how surely would a confidence in each

other's truth and honesty tend to the restoration of peace and harmony! Even the wily Florentine* allows, that it is advantageous to have a high character for truth and uprightness. And how can this character be in any way so well obtained as by deserving it? It is the disgrace of nations, that, in their diplomatic concerns, the maxims of solid wisdom have not been always observed.

Without going the length of admitting the truth of Sir Henry Wotton's light definition of the duties of an ambassador, is it not too often assumed, that the laws which bind private men, and which would doubtless bind the individual minister himself, in his private concerns, may occasionally be dispensed with, in the administration of public affairs; and that strict truth, for instance, which in the ordinary transactions of life is allowed to be indispensable, is too frequently considered as impracticable in diplomatic negotiations?

Don Louis De Haro, the Spanish minister, at the treaty of the Pyrenees, seems to have entertained just views of the value of simple integrity in politicians; for speaking of Cardinal Mazarin, with whom he was negotiating, he said, "that man always pursues one great error in politics — he would always deceive." Mazarin was a deep dissembler and a narrow genius†; so true it is,

* Machiavel.

† Mazarin himself had spread his own maxims to such good purpose, that one of his creatures, whom he intended to send to negotiate with the Duke of Savoy, implored his Eminence not to insist on his deceiving the Duke *just at that*

that vanity and short-sightedness are commonly at the bottom of dissimulation, though it be practised from a totally opposite idea; worldly politicians frequently falling into the error of fancying, that craft and circumvention are indications of genius: while, in reality, suspicion is the wisdom of a little mind, and distrust the mean and inefficient substitute for the penetration of a great one. "Many," says Lord Bacon, "who know how to pack the cards, cannot play them well. Many, who can manage canvasses and factions, are yet not wise men." Considering the credit which sincerity stamps on a political character, it is so far from being opposed to discretion, that it constitutes the best part of it. True rectitude neither implies nor requires imprudence; while it costs a politician as much trouble to maintain the reputation of a quality which he has not, as it would really cost him to acquire it. The mazes and windings, the doublings and intricacies, of intriguing spirits, ultimately mislead them from the end they pursue. They excite jealousy, they rouse resentment, they confirm suspicion, they strengthen prejudices, they foment differences; and thus call into action a number of passions which commonly oppose themselves to the accomplishment of their designs. Politicians, therefore, would do well to remember the remark of the learned Barrow, who was as

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time, as the business was but a trifle; because he thought it would answer better to reserve the sacrifice of his reputation for deceiving till some more important object was at stake.

great a proficient in mathematics as in morality, that "the straightest line is always the shortest line in morals as well as in geometry." When the character of integrity is once lost, falsehood itself loses all its uses. The known dissembler is suspected of insincerity even when he does not practise it, and is no longer trusted, though he may happen to deserve to be so.

The character of Lord Sunderland presents a striking instance of the political inefficacy of duplicity. His superior genius, so admirably qualified for business, availed him but little in securing the public esteem, when it was observed, that of three successive princes, who severally set out with a view to establish different interests, he gained the favour of all, by adopting the system of each, with the same accommodating versatility. His reputation for honesty sunk, and he ceased to be trusted in the degree in which he came to be known.

We sometimes hear the more decent politicians, who sanction the appearances and commend the outward observances of religion, lament that religion does not produce any great effects upon society. And they are right, if by religion they mean that shell and surface which merely serve to save appearances. But is it not to be feared that these very politicians sometimes disbelieve the reality and the power of that religion, the exterior of which they allow to be decorous? Yet this reality and power, believed and acted upon, would certainly produce more substantial effects than can

ever *rationally* be expected from mere forms and shadows. These sage persons frequently lament the deficiency of morals in society, but never the want of religion in the heart; though to expect that morality to be firm which stands on no religious foundation is to expect stability from an inverted pyramid.

Besides, it is infinitely laborious to maintain an undeviating course of dissimulation, a moment's intermission of which may defeat the policy of years. Yet this unremitting attention, this wearying watchfulness, is essential to that worldly policy, of which South says, that "Folly being the superstructure, it is but reason that the foundation should be falsity." The same acute judge of mankind observes, that the designing politicians of the party he was combating seemed to act as if they thought "that speech was given to ordinary men to communicate their mind, but to wise men for concealing it."

The dissembler should also remember, that, however deeply interest and industry enable him to lay his plans, the interest and industry of others will be equally at work to detect them. Besides, the deepest politician can carry on no great schemes alone; and as all association depends on opinion, few will lend their aid, or commit their safety to one whose general want of probity forbids the hope of perpetual confidence, or of permanent security.

Why do many politicians fail finally of the full accomplishment of their object? Not for want of

genius to lay a plausible plan; not for want of judgment to seize the most favourable occasions; not for want of due contempt of conscientious scruples in pushing those occasions; not for want of fearless impiety in giving full scope to their designs; but from that ever-wakeful Providence, which, if he does not dash their projects before they are acted, defeats the main intention afterwards. Even the successful usurper, Cromwell, lost the confidence of his army when they found, in the sequel, that he meant to place himself on the very throne which he had made them believe it was his great object to abolish. Nor was he ever able to adorn his own brows with that crown, for the hope of which he had waded through a sea of crimes. The very means employed by Alexander the Sixth and Cæsar Borgia to destroy the Cardinals rebounded on themselves, and both were poisoned by the very wine which they had prepared for the destruction of their guests.

It is, therefore, the only safety, and the only wisdom, and the only sure unfading prudence, instead of pursuing our own devious paths, to commit our concerns to God, to walk in his straight ways, and obey his plain commands; for, after all, the widest sphere of a mere worldly politician is but narrow. The wisdom of this world is bounded by this world; the dimensions of which are so contracted, and its duration so short, in the eye of true philosophy, as to strip it of all real grandeur. All the enjoyments of this world, says the eloquent South, are much too short for an immortal

soul to stretch itself upon; a soul which shall persist in being, not only when honour and fame, but when time itself shall cease to be. The deepest worldly projector, with the widest views and the strongest energies, even when flushed with success, must, if his mind has never learned to shoot forward into the boundless eternity of an unseen world, feel his genius cramped, his wing flag, and his spirit at a stand. There seems to have been a spark of the immortal fire even in the regrets of Alexander. It is probable he would not have wept, because he had no more worlds to conquer, had he not deeply felt the sting of disappointment at finding no joy in having conquered this, and thence inferred a kind of vague and shapeless idea of another. There will be always too vast a disproportion between the appetites and enjoyments of the ambitious to admit of their being happy. Nothing can fill the desires of a great soul but what he is persuaded will last as long as he himself shall last.

To worldly minds it would sound paradoxical to assert that ambition is a *little* passion. To affirm that if really great views and truly enlarged notions were impressed upon the soul, they would be so far from promoting, that they would cure this passion. The excellent Bishop Berkeley, beholding the ravages which ambition had made in his time in France, could not help wishing that its encroaching monarch had been bred to the study of astronomy, that he might learn from thence how mean and little that ambition is which termi-

nates in a small part of what is itself but a point, compared with that part of the universe which lies within our view.

But, if astronomy shows the diminutiveness of that globe, for a very small portion of which kings contend, in comparison with the universe, how much nobler a cure does Christianity provide for ambition, by showing that not this globe only, but the whole universe also,

> Yea, all that it inherits, shall dissolve;

by reminding the ambitious of the utter insufficiency, to true glory or real happiness, of all that has been created, of all that shall have an end; by carrying on their views to that invisible, eternal world, which to us shall then emphatically begin to be, when all which we behold shall be no more.

He, therefore, is the only true politician who uniformly makes the eternal laws of truth and rectitude, as revealed from heaven, the standard of his actions, and the measure of his ambition. "To do justly," is peculiarly the high and holy vocation of a prince. And both princes and politicians would do well to enquire, not only whether their scheme was planned with sagacity, and executed with spirit, but whether they have so conducted it as to leave proper room, if we may so speak, for the favourable interference of God; whether they have supplicated his blessing, and given to him the glory of its happy issue? Perhaps more well-meant endeavours fail through neglect in these respects, particularly of fervent

prayer for success, than through any deficiency in the wisdom of the plan itself. But because, under a fanatic usurpation in the seventeenth century, hypocrites abused this duty, and degraded its sanctity, by what they profanely called *seeking the Lord*, the friends of the restored constitution too generally took up the notion that irreligion was a proof of sincerity, and that the surest way to avoid the hypocrisy was to omit the duty.

We cannot too strongly censure that most mistaken practice, which, at the period before mentioned, reduced the language of Scripture to that of common conversation; nor too warmly condemn that false taste, which by quaint allusions, forced conceits, and strained allegories, wrested the Bible to every ordinary purpose, and debased its dignity by this colloquial familiarity. But is there no danger of falling into the opposite error? If some have unseasonably forced it into the service, on occasions to which it could never apply, may not others acquire the habit of thinking it seasonable on no occasion at all?

Again — how strangely do we overlook the consummate wisdom, as well as goodness, of God, in having made that practice of prayer the instrument of obtaining his blessing, which is so powerfully operative in purifying and elevating our own hearts. Politicians, with all their sagacity, would do well to learn, that it is likewise one of the many beneficial effects of prayer, that it not only reasonably increases our hopes of success, but teaches us to acquiesce in disap-

pointment. They should learn, also, not to wonder, if God refuses to answer those prayers which are *occasionally* put up on great public emergencies, when those who offer them do not live in the exercise of habitual devotion. They should take it as an axiom of good experience from the incomparable Hooker, that "All things religiously begun are prosperously ended; because whether men, in the end, have that which religion allowed them to desire, or that which it teacheth them contentedly to suffer, they are, in neither event, unfortunate."

Nor will a truly pious prince ever be eventually defeated in his designs: he may not, indeed, be successful in every negotiation, he may not be victorious in every battle; yet in his leading purpose he will never be disappointed. For his ultimate end was to act conscientiously, to procure the favour of God, to advance the best interests of his people, and to secure his own eternal happiness. Whatever the event may be to others, to himself it must be finally good. *The effect of righteousness is peace. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.* And, to conclude in the words of the able and profound Barrow, "If God shall not cease to be; if he will not let go the reins; if his word cannot deceive; if the wisest men are not infatuated; if the common sense of mankind is not extravagant; if the main props of life, if the great pillars of society, do not fail; — he that walketh uprightly doth proceed on sure grounds."

CHAP. XX.

ON THE TRUE ARTS OF POPULARITY.

CICERO says, "That it is the property of justice not to injure men, and of politeness not to offend them." True Christianity not only unites but perfects both these qualities; and renders them, thus associated and exalted, powerful instruments, especially in princes, for the acquisition of popularity.

The desire of praise and reputation is commonly the first motive of action in second-rate, and a secondary motive in first-rate, characters. That, in the former case, men who are not governed by a higher principle, are often so keenly alive to human opinion, as to be restrained by it from such vices as would disturb the peace of society, is an instance of the useful provision made by the great Governor of all things, for the good order of the world.

But in princes, none of whose actions are indifferent, who are "the observed of all observers," reputation cannot be too highly prized. A negligence respecting public opinion, or a contempt for the judgment of posterity, would be inexcusable in those, whose conduct must, in no inconsiderable degree, give, in their own time, the law to manners, and whose example will hereafter be adduced, by future historians, either to il-

lustrate virtue, or to exemplify vice, and to stimulate to good or evil monarchs yet unborn.

"A prince," however, as a late eloquent statesman* observed in his own case, "should love that fame which follows, not that which is pursued." He should bear in mind, that shadows owe their being to substances; that true fame derives its existence from something more solid than itself; that reputation is not the precursor, nor the cause, but the fruit and effect of merit.

But though, in superficial characters, the hunger of popularity is the main-spring of action; and though the vain-glorious too often obtain what they so sedulously seek, the acclamations of the vulgar; yet a temperate desire to be loved and esteemed is so far from being a proof of vanity, that it even indicates the contrary propensity: for reasonably to wish for the good opinion of others evinces that a man does not overvalue and sit down contented with his own. It is an over-estimation of himself, an undue complacency in his own merit, which is one of the causes of his disdain of public opinion. In profligate characters, another cause is, that, anticipating the contempt which they must be aware they have deserved, they are willing to be beforehand with the world in proclaiming their disdain of that reputation, which they know that their course of life has made unattainable.

Pagan philosophy, indeed, over-rated *the honour which cometh from man*. But even the sacred

* The first Earl of Mansfield.

Scripture, which, as it is the only true fountain, is also the only just standard of all excellence, does not teach us to despise, but only not to set an undue value upon it. It teaches us to estimate this honour in its due order and just measure; and, above all, it exhorts us to see that it be sought on right grounds; to take care that it tempt not to vanity, by exciting to trifling pursuits; nor to vice, by stimulating to such as are base; nor to false honour, by seeking it in the paths of ambition. A prince must not be inordinate in the desire, nor irregular in the pursuit, nor immoderate in the enjoyment, nor criminally solicitous for the preservation, of fame; but he must win it fairly, and wear it temperately. He should pursue it, not as the ultimate end of life, but as an object, which, by making life honourable, makes it useful. It must not, however, be omitted, that the Scriptures exhort, that when reputation can only be attained or preserved by the sacrifice of duty, it must then be renounced; that we must submit to the loss even of this precious jewel, rather than, by retaining it, wound the conscience or offend God. Happily, however, in a country in which religion and laws are established on so firm a basis, a prince is little likely to be called to such an absolute renunciation, though he may be called to many trials.

But all these dangers being provided for, and all abuses guarded against, the word of God does not scruple to pronounce reputation to be a valuable possession. In a competition with *riches*, the pre-

eminence is assigned to a *good name;* and *wisdom*, that is, religion, in the bold language of Eastern imagery, is described as bearing *honour* in her left hand. Nor has the sacred volume been altogether silent, respecting even that posthumous renown which good princes may expect in history. That *the memory of the just shall be blessed*, was the promise of one who was himself both an author and a monarch; and that *the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance*, was the declaration of another royal author.*

A desire of popularity is still more honest in princes than in other men. And when the end for which it is sought, and the means by which it is pursued, are strictly just, the desire is not only blameless, but highly laudable. Nor is it ever censurable, except where the affection of the people is sought by plausible means, for pernicious purposes. On the part of the people attachment is a natural feeling, which nothing but persevering misconduct in their rulers can ever wear out. A prince should learn not to listen to those flatterers who would keep him ignorant of the public opinion. The discontents of the people should not be stifled before they reach the royal ear; nor should their affection be represented as a fund which can never be drained. It is a rich and precious stock, which should not be too often drawn upon. Imprudence will diminish, oppression will exhaust it. A prince should never

* See an admirable sermon of Dr. Barrow, on the reward of honouring God.

measure his rights over a people by the greatness of their attachment; the warmth of their zeal being a call for his kindness, not a signal for his exactions. Improvident rigour would wear out that affection, which justice would increase, and consideration confirm.

Britons, in general, possess that *obsequium erga reges*, which Tacitus ascribes to the Swedes. While they passionately love liberty, they also patiently bear those reasonable burdens which are necessary in order to preserve it. But this character of our countrymen seems not to have been so well understood, at least not so fairly represented, by one of their own sovereigns, as by a foreigner and an enemy. The unfortunate James calls them "a fickle, giddy, and rebellious people." If the charge were true, he and his family rather made than found them such. Agricola had pronounced them to be a people, "who cheerfully complied with the levies of men, and the imposition of taxes, and with all the duties enjoined by government, provided they met with just and lawful treatment from their governors." — "Nor have the Romans," continues he, "any farther conquered them, than only to form them to obedience. *They never will submit to be slaves.*" * It is pleasant to behold the freest of nations, even now, acting up to the character given them by the first of historians, on such unquestionable authority as that of their illustrious invader, near two thousand years ago.

Even the fatal catastrophe of Charles I. was not

* Tacitus's Life of Agricola.

a national act, but the act of a fanatical party. The kingdom at large beheld the deed with deep abhorrence, and deplored it with unfeigned sorrow. —The fascinating manners of his son and successor so won the hearts of every one who approached him, that it required all his vices to alienate them. If that gracious outward deportment was of so much use to him, in veiling for a time the most corrupt designs, how essentially must it serve a prince who meditates only such as are beneficial! William was not so happy as to find out this secret. Satisfied with having saved the country, he forgot that it was important to please it; and he in some measure lost, by his forbidding manners, and his neglect of studying our national character, the hearts of a people who owed him their best blessings.

—— Charles, the abject tool of France,
Came back to smile his subjects into slaves;
While Belgic William, with his warrior frown,
Coldly declared them free.

The charming frankness and noble simplicity of manners, which distinguished Henry IV. of France, gained the affections of his subjects, more than all the refinements of artifice could have done. He had established such a reputation for sincerity, that when, on a certain occasion, he offered hostages to his mortal enemies the Spaniards, they refused to accept them, and would only take his *word*. He frequently declared, that he would lose his crown rather than give, even to his worst foe, the least suspicion of his fidelity to his engage-

ments. So happily infectious is this principle in a king, that not only Sully, but his other minister, Jeannin, was distinguished by the same strict regard to truth; and the popularity both of the king and his ministers was proportionably great.

The only way, then, for a prince to secure the affection of the people is to deserve it, by letting them see that he is steadily consulting their interests, and invariably maintaining them. What but this so long preserved to Elizabeth that rooted regard in the hearts of her subjects? Certainly no pliancy of manners, no gracious complaisance. She treated even her parliaments in so peremptory a manner, that they sometimes only bore with it, from a thorough conviction, that the interests of the country were secure in her hands, and its happiness as dear to her as her own.* These are the true foundations of popularity. He, who most consults the good of his people, will, in general, be most trusted by them; he, who best merits their affection, will be most sure to obtain it, in spite of the arts of a cabal, or the turbulence of a faction.

Pagan fable relates, that when the inferior gods had once formed a conspiracy to bind Jupiter, Minerva advised him to send for Briareus, the monster with the hundred hands, to come to his assistance;

* "You have lived," says Lord Thomas Howard to his friend in James I.'s reign, "to see the trim of old times, and what passed in the Queen's days. These things are no more the same; your Queen did talk of her subjects' *love* and *good affections*, and in good truth she aimed well: our King talketh of his subjects' *fear* and *subjection*," &c. &c.

the poets, doubtless, intimating by this fiction, that wisdom will always suggest to a prince, that his best security will ever be found in the ready attachment and assistance of the people. And it was a good practice which the famous Florentine secretary * records of the then King of France, that he would never allow any person to say, that *he was of the King's party*, which would always imply, that there was another party against him; whereas the King prudently desired not to have it thought that there were any parties at all. And, indeed, wise sovereigns will study carefully to repress all narrowing terms, and dividing ideas. Of such sovereigns *the people are the party*.

Princes will have read history with little attention, if they do not learn from it, that their own true greatness is so closely connected with the happiness of their subjects, as to be inseparable from it. There they will see, that while great schemes of conquest have always been productive of extreme suffering to the human race, in their execution, they have often led to ultimate dishonour and ruin to the monarchs themselves. Herein a pious mind will recognise the goodness of the Almighty, which, notwithstanding the temptations and impediments that, in this probationary state, obstruct the progress, and render difficult the practice of virtue in private life, has yet held out to those, who are endowed with kingly power, a strong inducement to use it for the promotion of their people's happiness, by rendering such designs

* Machiavel.

as tend to the gratification of many vicious appetites, which they are most tempted to indulge, far more difficult of execution, than such as are prompted by benevolent emotions, and have in view the advancement of civil and social happiness.

Thus, projects of conquest and ambition are circumscribed, and obstructed by a thousand inherent and unavoidable difficulties. They are often dependent for their success on the life of a single man, whose death, perhaps, when least expected, at once disconcerts them. Often they depend on what is still more uncertain, — the caprice or humour of an individual. When all is conceived to be flourishing and successful, when the prosperous enterpriser fancies that he is on the very point of gaining the proud summit to which he has so long aspired; or at the very moment when it is attained, and he is exulting in the hope of immediate enjoyment, — at once he is dashed to the ground, his triumphs are defeated, his laurels are blasted, and he himself only remains,

To point a moral, or adorn a tale,

a lasting monument of the folly of ambition, and of the uncertainty of all projects of wordly grandeur.

But the monarch, on the contrary, whose nobler and more virtuous ambition prompts him to employ his superior power in promoting the internal prosperity and comforts of his subjects, is not liable to such defeats. His path is plain; his duty is clear. By a vigilant, prompt, and impartial admin-

istration of justice, his object is to secure to the industrious the enjoyment of their honest gains; by a judicious use of his supreme power, to remove difficulties and obstructions out of the way of commercial enterprise, and to facilitate its progress; to reward and foster ingenuity; and to encourage and promote the various arts by which civilised societies are distinguished and embellished; above all, to countenance and favour religion, morality, good order, and all the social and domestic virtues. A monarch, who makes these benevolent ends the objects of his pursuit, will not so easily be disappointed. The reason is obvious; nothing depends on a single individual. His plans are carrying on through ten thousand channels, and by ten thousand agents, who, while they are all labouring for the promotion of their own peculiar object, are, at the same time, unconsciously performing their function in the great machine of civil society. It is not, if we may change the metaphor, a single plant, perhaps an exotic, in a churlish climate, and an unwilling soil, which, raised with anxious care, a sudden frost may nip, or a sudden blight may wither; but it is the widespread vegetation of the meadow, which abundantly springs up in one unvaried face of verdure, beauty, and utility. While the happy monarch, whose large and liberal mind has projected and promoted this scene of peaceful industry, has the satisfaction of witnessing the gradual diffusion of comfort; — of comfort, which, enlarging with the progress of his plans to their full establishment,

has been completed, not like the successful projects of triumphant ambition, in the oppression and misery of subjugated slaves, but in the freedom and happiness of a contented people.

To the above important objects of royal attention, such a sovereign as we are contemplating will naturally add a disposition for the promotion of charitable and religious institutions, as well as of those whose more immediate object is political utility; proportioning, with a judicious discrimination, the measure of support and countenance to the respective degree of excellence. To these will be superadded a beneficient patronage to men of genius, learning, and science. Royal patronage will be likely not only to contribute to the carrying of talents into beneficial channels, but may be the means of preventing them from being diverted into such as are dangerous. And when it is received as an universally established principle, that the direction of the best abilities to none but the soundest purposes is the way to ensure the favour of the prince, it will be an additional spur to genius to turn its efforts to the promotion of virtue and of public utility. — Such are the views, such the exertions, such the felicities, of a patriot king, of a Christian politician!

CHAP. XXI.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ROYAL EXAMPLE IN PROMOTING LOYALTY.— ON FALSE PATRIOTISM.— PUBLIC SPIRIT.

A WISE prince will be virtuous, were it only through policy. The measure of his power is the rule of his duty. He who practises virtue and piety himself, not only holds out a broad shelter to the piety and virtue of others, but his example is a living law, efficacious to many of those who would treat written laws with contempt. The good conduct of the prince will make others virtuous; and the virtuous are always the peaceable. It is the voluptuous, the prodigal, and the licentious, who are the needy, the unsettled, and the discontented, who love change, and promote disturbance. If sometimes the affluent and the independent swell the catalogue of public disturbers, they will frequently be found to be men of inferior abilities, used by the designing as necessary implements to accomplish their work. The one set furnish mischief, the other means. Sallust has, in four exquisitely chosen words, given, in the character of one innovator, that of almost the whole tribe, — *Alieni appetens, sui profusus.* But allegiance is the fruit of sober integrity; and fidelity grows on the stock of independent honesty. As there is little public honour where there is little private prin-

ciple, so it is to be feared there will be little private principle, at least, among young persons of rank, where the throne holds out the example of a contrary conduct.

It is true, that public virtue and public spirit are things, which all men, of all parties, and all characters, equally agree to extol, equally desire to have the credit of possessing. The reputation of patriotism is eagerly coveted by the most opposite characters, and pursued by the most contradictory means; by those who sedulously support the throne and constitution, and by those who labour no less sedulously to subvert them. Even the most factious, those who are governed by the basest selfishness, aspire to the dignity of a character, against which their leading principle and their actual practice constantly militate.

But patriots of this stamp are chiefly on the watch to exemplify their public spirit in their own restless way: they are anxiously looking out for some probable occurrence, which may draw them into notice, and are more eager to fish for fame, in the troubled waters of public commotion, than disposed to live in the quiet exercise of those habitual virtues, which, if general, would preclude the possibility of any commotion at all. These innovating reformers always affect to suppose more virtue in mankind than they know they shall find, while their own practice commonly exhibits a low standard of that imaginary perfection on which their fallacious reasonings are grounded. There is scarcely any disposition which leads to this

factious spirit more than a restless vanity, because it is a temper which induces a man to be making a continual comparison of himself with others. His sense of his own superior merit and inferior fortune will fill his mind with perpetual competition with the inferior merit and superior fortune of those above him. He will ever prefer a storm in which he may become conspicuous, to a calm in which he is already secure. Such a *soi-disant* patriot does not feel for the general interests of his country, but only for that portion of it which he himself may have a chance of obtaining. Though a loud declaimer for the privileges of universal man, he really sees no part of the whole circle of human happiness, except that segment which he is carving for himself. He does not rejoice in those plentiful dews of heaven, which are fertilising the general soil, but in those which fatten his own pastures. "It is not," says the admirable South, "from the common, but the inclosure, from which he calculates his advantages."

But true public spirit is not the new-born offspring of sudden occasion, nor the incidental fruit of casual emergency, nor the golden apple thrown out to contentious ambition. It is that genuine patriotism, which best prevents disturbance, by discouraging every vice that leads to it. It springs from a combination of disinterestedness, integrity, and content. It is the result of many long-cherished domestic charities. Its seminal principles exist in a sober love of liberty, order, law, peace, and justice, the best safeguards of the throne, and

the only happines of the people. Instead of that selfish patriotism which, in ancient Rome, consisted in subverting the comfort of the rest of the world, the public spirit of a British patriot is not only consistent with Christianity, but (maugre the assertion of a wit already quoted *) in a good degree dictated by it. His religion, so far from forbidding, even enjoins him to consider himself as such a member of the body politic, such a joint of the great machine, that, remembering the defect of a pin may disconcert a system, he labours to fill up his individual part as assiduously as if the motion of every wheel, the effect of every spring, the success of the whole operation, the safety of the entire community, depended on his single conduct. This patriotism evinces itself by sacrifices in the rich, by submission in the poor, by exertions in the able, strong in their energy, but quiet in their operation: it evinces itself by the sober satisfaction of each in cheerfully filling the station which is assigned him by Providence, instead of aspiring to that which is pointed out by ambition; by each man performing with conscientious strictness his own proper duty, instead of descanting with misleading plausibility, and unprofitable eloquence, on the duties of other men.

* Soame Jenyns.

CHAP. XXII.

ON THE GRACES OF DEPORTMENT. — THE DISPOSITIONS NECESSARY FOR BUSINESS. — HABITS OF DOMESTIC LIFE.

"THOSE," says Lord Bacon, "who are accomplished in the forms of urbanity, are apt to please themselves in it so much as seldom to aspire to higher virtue." Notwithstanding the general truth of the maxim, and the high authority by which it comes recommended, yet condescending and gracious manners should have their full share in finishing the royal character; but they should have only their *due* share. They should never be resorted to as a substitute for that worth, of which they are the best decoration. In all the graces of deportment, whatever appears outwardly engaging, should always proceed from something deeper than itself. The fair fabric, which is seen, must be supported by a solid foundation which is out of sight; the loftiest pyramid must rise from the broadest base; the most beautiful flower from the most valuable root; sweetness of manners must be the effect of benevolence of heart; affability of speech should proceed from a well-regulated temper; a solicitude to oblige should spring from an inward sense of the duty owing to our fellow-creatures; the bounty of the hands must result from the feeling of the heart; the proprieties of conversation

from a sound internal principle; kindness, attention, and all the outward graces, should be the effect of habits and dispositions lying in the mind, and ready to show themselves in action, whenever the occasion presents itself.

Just views of herself, and of what she owes to the world, of that gentleness which Christianity inculcates, and that graciousness which her station enjoins, will, taking the usual advantages into the account, scarcely fail to produce in the royal pupil a deportment at once dignified and engaging. The firmest substances alone are susceptible of the most exquisite polish, while the meanest materials will admit of being varnished. True fine breeding never betrays any tincture of that vanity, which is the effect of a mind struggling to conceal its faults; nor of that pride, which is not conscious of possessing any. This genuine politeness, resulting from illustrious birth, inherent sense, and implanted virtue, will render superfluous the documents of Chesterfield, and the instructions of Castiglione.

But the acquisition of engaging manners, and all the captivating graces of deportment, need less occupy the mind of the royal person, as she will acquire these attractions by a sort of instinct, almost without time or pains. They will naturally be copied from those illustrious examples of grace, ease, and condescending dignity, which fill, and which surround the throne. And she will have the less occasion for looking to remote or foreign examples to learn the true arts of popularity,

while the illustrious personage who wears the crown continues to exhibitnot only a living pattern by what honest means the warm affections of a people are won, but by what rectitude, piety, and patriotism, they may be preserved, and increased, under every succession of trial, and every vicissitude of circumstance.

Among the habits which it is important for a prince to aequire, there is not one more essential than a love of business. Lord Bacon has, among his Essays, an admirable chapter, both of counsel and caution, respecting despatch in affairs, which, as it is short and pointed, the royal pupil might commit to memory. He advises to measure despatch not by the time of sitting to business, but by the advancement of the business itself; and reprobates the affectation of those, who, "to gain the reputation of men of despatch, are only anxious for the credit of having done a great deal in a little time; and who abbreviate, not by contracting, but by cutting off."— On the other hand, procrastination wears out time, and accomplishes nothing. Indistinctness also in the framing of ideas, and confusion in the disorderly disposition of them, perplex business as much as irresolution impedes it. Julius Cæsar was a model in this respect: with all his turbulence of ambition, with all his eagerness of enterprise, with all his celerity of despatch, his judgment uniformly appears to have been cool and serene; and even in the midst of the most complicated transactions, no perplexity is ever manifest in his conduct, no entanglement in

his thoughts, no confusion in his expressions. Hence, we cannot but infer, that an unambiguous clearness in the planning of affairs, a lucid order in arranging, and a persevering, but not precipitate, despatch in conducting them, are the unequivocal marks of a superior mind.

Yet, though distribution, order, and arrangement, are the soul of business, even these must not be too minute; "for he that does not divide," says the great authority above cited, "will never enter clearly into business; and he who divides too much, will not come out of it clearly."

A prince should come to the transaction of business with a prepared, but not with a prejudiced, mind; and the mind which is best furnished for the concern which it is about to investigate, while it will be least liable to be drawn aside by persuasion, will be most open to truth, and most disposed to yield to conviction, because it will have already weighed the arguments, and balanced the difficulties.

A great statesman of that nation to which we are rather apt to ascribe steadiness than rapidity, has bequeathed a valuable lesson to princes for the despatch of business. It is well known that De Wit assigned as the chief reason why he had himself been enabled to prosecute such a multiplicity of concerns so easily was, *by always doing one thing at a time.*

It is therefore important, not only fully to possess the mind with the affair which is under consideration, but to bestow on it an undivided atten-

tion, an application which cannot be diverted by irrelevant or inferior objects; and to possess a firmness which cannot be shaken from its purpose by art or flattery;—cautions the more necessary, as we are assured by a penetrating observer, that even the strong mind of Elizabeth was not always proof against such attacks. One of the secretaries of this great queen never came to her to sign bills that he did not first take care to engage her in deep discourse about other weighty business, that, by thus pre-occupying her mind, he might draw off her attention from the bills to which he wanted her signature.

For the private habits of life, and propriety of conduct to those around her, Queen Mary, as described by Bishops Burnet* and Fowler, seems to have been a model. Her goodness was the most unostentatious, her gentleness the most unaffected, her piety the most inwoven into her habits, her charity the best principled, and her generosity the most discriminating. Vanity and self-love seem to have been not merely outwardly repressed from a sense of decorum, but to have been inwardly extinguished; and she did not want the veil of art to conceal faults which were not working within. She seems to have united consummate discretion with the most conscientious sincerity. She could deny, says her admiring biographer, the most earnest solicitations with a true firmness, when she thought the person for whom they were made did not merit them. She possessed one quality of

* See especially Bishop Burnet's Essay on Queen Mary.

peculiar value in her station — a gentle but effectual method of discouraging calumny. If any indulged a spirit of censoriousness in her presence, continues he, she would ask them, if they had read Archbishop Tillotson's sermon on evil-speaking? or give them some other pointed but delicate reproof.

Princes should never forget, that where sincerity is expected, freedom must be allowed; and that they, who show themselves displeased at truth, must not be surprised if they never hear it. In all their intercourse, they should not only be habituated to expect from others, but to practise themselves, the most simple veracity; they should no more employ flattery than exact it. It will be necessary for them to bear in mind, that such is the selfishness of the human heart, that we are not disinterested in our very praises; and that, in excessive commendation, we commonly consider ourselves more than the person we commend. It is often rather a disguised effect of our own vanity, than any real admiration of the person we extol. That flattery which appears so liberal, is, in fact, one of the secret artifices of self-love: it looks generous, but it is in reality covetous; and praise is not so much a free gift as a mercenary commerce, for which we hope to receive, in return, more than an equivalent.

Is there not something far more cunning than noble in that popular art which Pliny recommends, "to be liberal of praise to another for any thing in which you yourself excel?" — The motive is surely selfish, that, whether you deserve it or not,

you may thus, either way, be certain of securing the superiority to yourself. If censure wants the tenderness of charity to make it useful, praise requires the modesty of truth and the sanctity of justice to render it safe. It is observable, that in the sacred Scriptures, which we should do well always to consult as our model, though there is sometimes simple commendation, yet there is no excessive praise, nor even the slightest tincture of exaggeration.

But there is a fault, the direct opposite to flattery, which should with equal vigilance be guarded against. There is nothing which more effectually weans attachment, and obstructs popularity, than the indulgence of intemperate speech and petulant wit. And they who, in very exalted stations, unfortunately feel a propensity to impetuosity or sarcasm, would do well, if they will not repress the feeling (which would be the shortest way), not to let it break out in pointed sentences, or cutting sayings, sharp enough to give pain, and short enough to be remembered. It has this double disadvantage: every wound made by a royal hand is mortal to the feelings of those on whom it is inflicted; and every heart which is thus wounded is alienated. Besides, it is an evil which "gathers strength by going." The sayings of princes are always repeated, and they are not always repeated faithfully. Lord Bacon records several instances of sovereigns who ruined themselves by this sententious indiscretion. The mis-

chief of concise sayings, he observes, is that "they are darts, supposed to be shot from their secret intentions, while long discourses are flat, less noticed, and little remembered."

CHAP. XXIII.

ON THE CHOICE OF SOCIETY. — SINCERITY THE BOND OF FAMILIAR INTERCOURSE. — LIBERALITY. — INSTANCES OF INGRATITUDE IN PRINCES. — ON RAISING THE TONE OF CONVERSATION. — AND OF MANNERS.

PRINCES can never fall into a more fatal error, than when, in mixing with dishonourable society, they fancy, either that their choice can confer merit, or their presence compensate for the want of it. It is, however, sometimes very difficult for them to discover the real character of those around them, because there may be a kind of conspiracy to keep them in the dark. But there is one principle of selection, which will in general direct them well, in the choice of their companions, that of choosing persons, who, in their ordinary habits, and in selecting the companions of their own hours of relaxation, show their regard for morality and virtue. From such men as these princes may more reasonably expect to hear the language of truth. Such persons will not be naturally led to connive at the vices of their master, in order to justify their own; they have no interest in being dishonest.

The people are not unnaturally led to form their judgment of the real principles and character of the prince from the conduct and manners of

his companions and favourites. Were not the subjects of the unhappy Charles I. in some degree excusable for not doing full justice to the piety and moral worth which really belonged to his character, when they saw that those who were his most strenuous advocates were, in general, avowedly profligate and profane? — If a monarch have the especial happiness of possessing a friend, let him be valued as the most precious of all his possessions; let him be encouraged to discharge the best office of friendship, by finding that the frankest reproofs, instead of generating a formality too fatally indicative of decaying affection, are productive, even when they may be conceived to be misplaced, of warmer returns of cordiality.

But kings, whether actual or expectant, must not hope, in general, to find this honest frankness. They must not expect to have their opinions controverted, or their errors exposed, directly or openly. They should, therefore, accustom themselves to hear and understand the still small voice, in which any disapprobation will be likely to be conveyed; they should use themselves to catch a hint, and to profit from an analogy; they should be on the watch to discover the sense which is entertained of their own principles or conduct, by observing the language which is used concerning similar principles and conduct in others. They must consider themselves as lying under special disadvantages, in respect to the discovery of truth, wherever they are themselves concerned; and

must, therefore, strive to become possessed of it with proportionate diligence and caution.

If an insinuating favourite find it more advantageous to himself to flatter than to counsel his prince, counsel will be withheld, and obsequiousness will be practised. The prince, in return, will conclude himself to be always in the right, when he finds that he is never opposed; and the remembrance of his faults, and the duty of correcting them, will be obliterated in the constant approbation which he is confident of receiving.

Discretion is a quality so important in the royal person, that he should early be taught the most absolute control over his own mind. He should learn that no momentary warmth of feeling should ever betray a prince into the disclosure of any thing which wisdom or duty requires him to conceal. But, while he is thus vigilantly careful not to commit himself, he should seldom appear to entertain any distrust of those in whom prudence forbids him to confide. There is scarcely a more unquestionable evidence of sound sense and self-possession, than never to seem burdened with a secret of one's own; nor a surer mark of true politeness, than not to pry curiously into that of another. "The perfection of behaviour," says Livy, though he said it on another occasion, "is for a man (he might have said a prince) to retain his own dignity without intruding on the liberty of another."

Those who have solicitations to make should never have reason given them to suspect that they

can work their way to the royal favour by flatteries which soothe, rather than by truths which enlighten. Above all, a prince should avoid discovering such weaknesses as may encourage suitors to expect success in their applications by such a spirit of accommodation, such silly compliments, servile sacrifices, and unworthy adulation, as are derogatory to his understanding and disgraceful to his character.*

* It would seem superfluous to guard the royal mind against such petty dangers, did not history furnish so many instances of their ill effects. How much the weak vanity of King James I. laid him open to these despicable flatteries, we have some curious specimens in a letter of Lord Thomas Howard to Sir John Harrington, from which we extract the following passage. In advising his friend how to conduct himself in the King's presence, in order to advance his fortune, after some other counsel he adds, "Touch but lightly on religion. Do not of yourself say, 'This is good or bad;' but if it were Your Majesty's good opinion, I myself should think so. In private discourse, the King seldom speaketh of any man's temper, discretion, or good virtues; so meddle not at all; but find out a clue to guide you to the heart, most delightful to his mind. — I will advise one thing: the roan Jennet, whereon the King rideth every day, must not be forgotten to be praised, and the good furniture above all. What lost a great man much notice the other day, a noble did come in suit of a place, and saw the King mounting the roan, delivered his petition, which was heeded and read, but no answer given. The noble departed, and came to courte the next day, and got no answer again. The Lord Treasurer was then pressed to move the King's pleasure touching the petition. When the King was asked for answer thereto, he said, in some wrath, 'Shall a king give heed to a dirty paper, when the beggar noticeth not his gilt stirrups?' Now it fell out, that the King had new furniture, when the noble saw him in the

A royal person should early be taught that it is no small part of wisdom and virtue to repel improper requests. But while firm in the principle, as Christian duty requires, it is no violation of that duty to be as gentle in the expression as Christian kindness demands; never forgetting the well-known circumstance that of two sovereigns of the house of Stuart, one *refused* favours in a more gracious manner than the other *granted* them. It is, therefore, not enough that a prince should acquire the disposition to confer favours, he should also cultivate the talent. He should not only know how and when to commend, and how and when to bestow, but also how and when to refuse; and should carefully study the important and happy art of discriminating between those whose merit deserves favour, and those whose necessities demand relief. It should be established into a habit to make no vague promises, raise no false hopes, and disappoint no hopes which have been fairly raised.

Princes should never shelter their meaning under ambiguous expressions, nor use any of those equivocal or general phrases which may be interpreted any way, and which, either from their ambiguity or indeterminate looseness, will be translated into that language which happens to suit the hopes or the fears of the petitioner. It should

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courte-yard; but he, being overcharged with confusion, passed by admiring the dressing of the horse. Thus, good knight, our noble failed in his suit." — *Nugæ Antiquæ.*

ever be remembered, that a hasty promise given to gain time, to save appearances, to serve a pressing emergency, or to avoid a present importunity, and not performed when the occasion occurs, does as much harm to the promiser in a political as in a moral view. For the final disappointment of such raised expectations will do an injury more than equivalent to any temporary advantage which could be derived from making the promise. Even the wiser worldly politicians have been aware of this. Cardinal Richelieu, overbearing as he was, still preserved the attachments of his adherents by never violating his engagements; while Mazarin, whose vices were of a baser strain, was true to no man, and therefore attached no man. There was no set of people on whom he could depend, because there was none whom he had not deceived. Though his less elevated capacity and more moderate ambition enabled him to be less splendidly mischievous than his predecessor, yet his bad faith and want of honour, his falsehood and low cunning, as they prevented all men from confiding in him during his life, so have they consigned his memory to perpetual detestation.

In habituating princes to delight to confer favours on the deserving, it should be remembered, that where it is right to bestow them at all, it is also right not to wait till they are solicited. But, while the royal person is taught to consider munificence as a truly princely virtue, yet an exact definition of what true, and especially what royal,

munificence is, will be one of the most salutary lessons he can learn. Liberality is one of the brightest stars in the whole constellation of virtues; but it shines most benignantly when it does not depend on its own solitary lustre, but blends its rays with the confluent radiance of the surrounding lights. The individual favour must not intrench on any superior claim; no bounty must infringe on its neighbouring virtues, justice or discretion; nor must it take its character from its outwardly resembling vices, ostentation, vanity, or profusion. Real merit of every kind should be remunerated; but those who possess merits foreign from their own profession, though they should be still rewarded, should not be remunerated out of the resources of that profession. Nor should talents, however considerable, which are irrelevant to the profession, be made a motive for placing a man in it. Louis XIV. chose Father la Chaise for his confessor, because he understood something of medals!

There is an idea of beautiful humanity suggested to princes in the Spectator *, in a fictitious account of the Emperor Pharamond, who made it his refreshment from the toils of business, and the fatigues of ceremony, to pass an hour or two in the apartment of his favourite, in giving audience to the claims of the meritorious, and in drying the tears of the afflicted. The entrance by which the sorrowful obtained access was called THE GATE OF THE UNHAPPY. A munificent prince

* Number 84.

may, in some degree, realise this idea. And what proportions in architecture, what magnificence in dimensions, what splendour of decoration, can possibly adorn a royal palace so gloriously as such *a gate of the unhappy?*

A royal person should be early taught, by an invincible love of justice, and a constant exercise of kindness, feeling, and gratitude, to invalidate that maxim, that in a court *les absens et les mourans ont toujours tort.* He should possess the generosity not to expect his favourites to sacrifice their less fortunate friends in order to make their court to him. Examples of this ungenerous selfishness should be commented on in reading. Madame de Maintenon sacrificed the exemplary Cardinal de Noailles, and the elegant and virtuous Racine, to the unjust resentment of the King, and refused to incur the risk of displeasing him by defending her oppressed and injured friends.

We have already mentioned the remuneration of services. In a reign where all was baseness, it is not easy to fix on a particular instance; else the neglect manifested by Charles II. towards the author of Hudibras carries on it a stain of peculiar ingratitude. It is the more unpardonable, because the monarch had taste enough to appreciate, and frequently to quote with admiration, the wit of Butler: a wit not transiently employed to promote his pleasure, or to win his favour; but loyally and laboriously exercised in composing one of the most ingenious and original, and, unquestionably, the most learned, poem in the English

language. A poem which, independently of its literary merit, did more to advance the royal cause, by stigmatising with unparalleled powers of irony and ridicule the fanaticism and hypocrisy of the usurper's party, than had, perhaps, been effected by all the historians, moralists, divines, and politicians put together. It is not meant, however, to give unqualified praise to this poem. From the heavy charges of levity, and even of profaneness, Hudibras cannot be vindicated; and a scrupulous sovereign would have wished that his cause had been served by better means. Such a sovereign was not Charles. So far from it, may it not be feared, that these grievous blemishes, instead of alienating the King from the poet, would too probably have been an additional motive for his approbation of the work, and, consequently, could not have been his reason for neglecting the author? *

A somewhat similar imputation of ingratitude towards Philip de Comines, though on different grounds of service, detracts not a little from the far more estimable character of Louis XII. As it was this monarch's honourable boast on another

* Dryden also materially served the royal cause by his admirable poem of Absalom and Achitophel, which determined the conquest of the Tories, after the exclusion parliaments. But Dryden was a profligate, whom no virtuous monarch could patronise. Though, when a prince refuses to remunerate the actual services of a first-rate genius, because he is an unworthy man, it would be acting consistently to withhold all favour from those who have only the vices without the talents.

occasion, that the King of France never resented the injuries offered to the Duke of Orleans, it should have been equally his care, that the services performed for the one should never have been forgotten by the other.

To confer dignity and useful elegance on the hours of social pleasure and relaxation is a talent of peculiar value, and one of which an highly-educated prince is in more complete possession than any other human being. He may turn even the passing topics of the day to good account, by collecting the general opinion; and may gain clearer views of ordinary events and opinions, by hearing them faithfully related, and fairly canvassed. Instead of falling in with the prevailing taste for levity and trifles, he may, without the smallest diminution of cheerfulness or wit in the conversation, insensibly divert its current into the purest channels. The standard of society may be gracefully, and almost imperceptibly, raised by exciting the attention to questions of taste, morals, ingenuity, and literature. Under such auspicious influence, every talent will not only be elicited, but directed to its true end. Every taste for what is excellent will be awakened; every mental faculty, and moral feeling, will be quickened; and the royal person, by the urbanity and condescension with which he thus calls forth abilities to their best exercise, will seem to have infused new powers into his honoured and delighted guests.

A prince is "the maker of manners;" and as

he is the model of the court, so is the court the model of the metropolis, and the metropolis of the rest of the kingdom. He should carefully avail himself of the rare advantage which his station affords, of giving, through this widely-extended sphere, the tone to virtue as well as to manners. He should bear in mind that high authority becomes a most pernicious power, when, either by example or countenance, it is made the instrument of extending and establishing corruptions.

We have given an instance of the powerful effect of example in princes, in the influence which the *sincerity* of Henry IV. of France had on those about him. An instance equally striking may be adduced of the eagerness with which the same monarch was imitated in his *vices*. Henry was passionately addicted to gaming; and the contagion of the King's example unhappily spread with the utmost rapidity, not only through the whole court but the whole kingdom.

And when not gaming only, but other irregularities, — when whatever is notoriously wrong, by being thus countenanced and protected, becomes thoroughly established and fashionable, few will be ashamed of doing wrong. Every thing, indeed, which the court reprobates will continue to be stigmatised; but, unhappily, every thing which it countenances will cease to be disreputable; and that which was accounted infamous under a virtuous, would cease to be dishonourable under a corrupt, reign. For while vice is discouraged by the highest authority, notwithstanding

it may be practised, it will still be accounted disgraceful; but, when that discountenance is withdrawn, shame and dishonour will no longer attend it. The contamination will spread wider, and descend lower; and purity will insensibly lose ground, when even notorious deviations from it are no longer attended with disgrace.

Anne of Austria has been flattered by historians, for having introduced a more refined politeness into the court of France, and for having multiplied its amusements. We hardly know whether this remark is meant to convey praise or censure. It is certain, that her cardinal, and his able predecessor, had address enough to discover, that the most effectual method of establishing a despotic government was to amuse the people, by encouraging a spirit of dissipation, and sedulously providing objects for its gratification. These dexterous politicians knew, that to promote a general passion for pleasure and idleness would, by engaging the minds of the people, render them less dangerous observers, both of the ministers and of their sovereigns. This project, which had, perhaps, only a temporary view, had lasting consequences. The national character was so far changed by its success, that the country seems to have been brought to the unanimous conclusion, that it was pleasanter to amuse than to defend themselves.

It is also worth remarking, that even where the grossest licentiousness may not be pursued, an unbounded passion for exquisite refinement in

pleasure, and for the luxurious gratification of taste, is attended with more deep and serious mischiefs than are perhaps intended. It stagnates higher energies; it becomes itself the paramount principle, and gradually, by debasing the heart, both disinclines and disqualifies it for nobler pursuits. The court of Louis XIV. exhibited a striking proof of this degrading perfection. The princes of the blood were so enchanted with its fascinating splendours, that they ignominiously submitted to the loss of all power, importance, and influence in the state, because, with a view to estrange them from situations of real usefulness and dignity, they were graciously permitted to preside in matters of taste and fashion, and to become the supreme arbiters in dress, spectacles, and decoration. *

* It is humiliating to the dignity of a prince, when his subjects believe that they can recommend themselves to his favour by such low qualifications as a nice attention to personal appearance, and modish attire. Of this we shall produce an instance from another passage of Lord Thomas Howard's Letters to Sir John Harrington. "The king," says he, "doth admire good fashion in cloaths. I pray you give good heed hereunto. I would wish you to be well trimmed; get a good jerkin well bordered, and not too short: the king saith he liketh a flowing garment. Be sure it be not all of one sort, but diversely coloured; the collar falling somewhat down, and your ruff well stiffened and bushy. We have lately had many gallants *who have failed in their suit for want of due observance in these matters.* The king is nicely heedful of such points, and dwelleth on good looks and handsome accoutrements." — *Nugæ Antiquæ.*

CHAP. XXIV.

ON THE ART OF MORAL CALCULATION, AND MAKING A TRUE ESTIMATE OF THINGS AND PERSONS.

A ROYAL person should early be taught to act on that maxim of one of the ancients, that the chief misfortunes of men arise from their never having learned *the true art of calculation.* This moral art should be employed to teach him how to weigh the comparative value of things, and to adjust their respective claims; assigning to each that due proportion of time and thought to which each will, on a fair valuation, be found to be entitled. It will also teach the habit of setting the concerns of time in contrast with those of eternity. This last is not one of those speculative points on which persons may differ without danger, but one in which an erroneous calculation involves inextricable misfortunes.

It is prudent to have a continual reference not only to the value of the object, but also to the probability there is of attaining it; not only to see that it is of sufficient importance to justify our solicitude; but also to take care that designs of remote issue, and projects of distinct execution, do not supersede present and actual duties. Providence, by setting so narrow limits to life itself, in which these objects are to be pursued, has clearly suggested to us the impropriety of forming schemes so dispropor-

tionate in their dimensions to our contracted sphere of action. Nothing but this doctrine of moral calculation will keep up in the mind a constant sense of that future reckoning, which, even to a private individual, is of unspeakable moment; but which, to a prince, whose responsibility is so infinitely greater, increases to a magnitude, the full sum of which the human mind would in vain attempt to estimate. This principle will afford the most salutary check to those projects of remote vain glory, and posthumous ambition, of which, in almost every instance, it is difficult to pronounce, whether they have been more idle or more calamitous.

History, fertile as it is in similar lessons, does not furnish a more striking instance of the mischiefs of erroneous calculation than in the character of Alexander. How falsely did he estimate the possible exertions of one man, and the extent of human life, when, in the course of his reign, which eventually proved a short one, he resolved to change the face of the world, to conquer its kingdoms, to enlighten its ignorance, and to redress its wrongs! A chimera, indeed, but a glorious chimera, had he not, at the same time, and to the last hour of his life, indulged passions inconsistent with his own resolutions, and subversive of his own schemes. His thirty-third year put a period to projects, for which many ages would have been insufficient; and the vanity of his ambition forms a forcible contrast to the grandeur of his designs. His gigantic empire, acquired by unequalled courage,

ambition, and success, did not gradually decay by the lapse of time; it did not yield to the imperious control of strange events, and extraordinary circumstances, which it was beyond the wisdom of man to foresee, or the power of man to resist; but naturally, but instantly, on the death of the conqueror, it was at once broken in pieces, all his schemes were in a moment abolished, and even the dissolution of his own paternal inheritance was speedily accomplished, by the contests of his immediate successors.

But we need not look back to ancient Greece for proofs of the danger of erroneous calculation, while Louis XIV. occupies the page of history. This desendant of fifty kings, after a triumphant reign of sixty years, having, like Alexander, been flattered with the name of *the Great*, and having, doubtless, like him, projected to reign after his decease, was not dead an hour before his will was cancelled;—a will not made in secret, and, like some of his former acts, annulled by its own inherent injustice, but publicly known, and generally approved by princes of the blood, counsellors, and parliaments. This royal will was set aside with less ceremony than would have been shown, in this country, to the testament of the meanest individual. All formalities were forgotten; all decencies trodden under foot. This decree of the new executive power became, in a moment, as absolute as that of the monarch, now so contemptuously treated, had lately been. No explanation was given, no arguments were heard, no objections ex-

amined. That sovereign was totally and instantly forgotten —

—— whose word
Might yesterday have stood against the world;
And none so poor to do him reverence.

The plans of Cæsar Borgia were so ably laid, that he thought he had put himself out of the reach of Providence. It was the boast of this execrable politician, that he had, by the infallible rules of a wise and foreseeing policy, so surely laid the immutable foundations of his own lasting greatness, that of the several possibilities which he had calculated, not one could shake the stability of his fortune. If the pope, his father, should live, his grandeur was secure; if he died, he had, by his interest, secured the next election. But this deep schemer had forgotten to take his own mortality into the account. He did not calculate on that sickness, which would remove him from the scene where his presence was necessary to secure these events; he did not foresee, that when his father died, his mortal enemy, and not his creature, would succeed, and, by succeeding, would defeat every thing. Above all, he did not calculate, that, when he invited to his palace nine cardinals, for whose supper he had prepared a deadly poison, in order to get their wealth into his own hands — he did not, I say, foresee, that

—— he but taught
Bloody instructions, which being taught, return
To plague the inventor —

He did not think that, *literally*,

——— Even-handed justice
Would give the ingredients of the poison'd chalice
To his own lips.

He had left out of his calculation, that the pope, his father, would perish by the very plot which was employed to enrich him; while he, Borgia himself, with the mortal venom in his veins, should only escape to drag on a life of meanness and misery, in want, and in prison; with the loss of his boundless wealth and power, losing all those adherents which that wealth and power had attracted.

It is of the last importance, that persons of high condition should be preserved from entering on their brilliant career with false principles, false views, and false maxims. It is of the last importance, to teach them not to confound splendour with dignity, justice with success, merit with prosperity, voluptuousness with happiness, refinement in luxury with pure taste, deceit with sagacity, suspicion with penetration, prodigality with a liberal spirit, honour with Christian principle, Christian principle with fanaticism, or conscientious strictness with hypocrisy.

Young persons possess so little clearness in their views, so little distinctness in their perceptions, and are so much inclined to prefer the suggestions of a warm fancy to the sober deductions of reason, that, in their pursuit of glory and celebrity, they are perpetually liable to take up with false way-marks; and where they have some general good intentions respecting the end, to

defeat their own purpose by a misapplication of means; so that, very often, they do not so much err through the seduction of the senses, as by accumulating false maxims into a sort of system, on which they afterward act through life.

One of the first lessons that should be inculcated on the great is, that God has not sent us into this world to give us consummate happiness, but to train us to those habits which lead to it. High rank lays the mind open to strong temptations; the highest rank to the strongest. The seducing images of luxury and pleasure, of splendour and of homage, of power and independence, are too seldom counteracted, by the only adequate preservative, a religious education. The world is too generally entered upon as a scene of pleasure instead of trial; as a theatre of amusement, not of action. The high-born are taught to enjoy the world at an age when they should be learning to know it; and to grasp the prize, when they should be exercising themselves for the combat. They consequently look for the sweets of victory, when they should be enduring the hardness of the conflict.

From some of these early corruptions, a young princess will be preserved, by that very supereminent greatness, which, in other respects, has its dangers. Her exalted station, by separating her from miscellaneous society, becomes her protection from many of its maxims and practices. From the dangers of her own peculiar situation she should be guarded, by being early taught to consider power and influence, not as exempting

her from the difficulties of life, or insuring to her a larger portion of its pleasures, but as engaging her in a peculiarly extended sphere of duties, and infinitely increasing the demands on her fortitude and vigilance.

The right formation of her judgment will much assist in her acquisition of right practical habits; and the art of making a just estimate of men and things will be one of the most useful lessons she will have to learn. Young persons, in their views of the world, are apt to make a false estimate of character, something in the way in which the Roman mob decided on that of Cæsar. They are dazzled with the glitter of a shining action, without scrutinising the character, or suspecting the motive, of the actor. From the scene which followed Cæsar's death, they may learn a salutary lesson. How easily did the insinuating Anthony persuade the people, that the man who had actually robbed them of their liberty, and of those privileges in defence of which their ancestors had shed their best blood, was a prodigy of disinterested generosity, because he had left them permission to walk in his pleasure-grounds! — the bequest of a few drachmas to each was sufficient to convince these shallow reasoners that their deceased benefactor was the most disinterested, and least selfish, of mankind. In this popular act they forgot that he had ravaged Greece, depopulated Gaul, plundered Asia, and subverted the commonwealth!

The same class of ardent and indiscriminating

judges will pass over, in the popular character of our fifth Henry, the profligacy of his morals, and the ambition of his temper, and think only of his personal bravery, and his splendid successes. They will forget, in the conqueror of Agincourt, the abettor of superstition and cruelty, and the unfeeling persecutor of the illustrious Lord Cobham.

But in no instance has a false judgment been more frequently made than in the admired and attractive character of Henry IV. of France. The frankness of his manners, the gallantry of his spirit, and the generosity of his temper, have concurred to unite the public judgment in his favour, and to obtain too much indulgence to his unsteady principles, and his libertine conduct. But the qualities which insure popularity too seldom stand the scrutiny of truth. Born with talents and dispositions to engage all hearts, Henry was defective in that radical principle of conscience, which is the only foundation of all true virtue. The renunciation of his religion for the crown of France, which was thought a master-stroke of policy, which was recommended by statesmen, justified by divines, and even *approved by Sully*, was, probably, as most acts of mere worldly policy often eventually prove to be, the source of his subsequent misfortunes. Had he preferred his religion to the crown of France, he had not fallen the victim of a fanatical assassin. Had he limited his desires to the kingdom of Navarre, when that of France could only be obtained by the sacrifice of his conscience, the heroism of his character would then have been

unequivocal, and his usefulness to mankind might have been infinitely extended. Nor is it impossible, that those who urged the condition might, by the steady perseverance of his refusal, have been induced to relinquish it; and French protestantism, from his conscientious adherence to its principles, might have derived such a strength as soon to have made it paramount in the state: an event which would probably have saved Europe from those horrors and agitations with which the late century closed, and the present has commenced, the termination of which remains awfully concealed in the yet unrolled volume of eternal Providence.

How much more solid, though neither sung by the poet, nor immortalised by the sculptor*, was the virtue of his illustrious mother, honourably introducing, with infinite labour and hazard, the reformation into her small territory! Nothing, says her warm eulogist, Bishop Burnet, was wanting to make the Queen of Navarre perfect, but a larger dominion. "She not only reformed her court, but her whole principality, to such a degree, that the golden age seems to have returned under her, or rather Christianity appeared again, with its pristine purity and lustre. Nor is there one single abatement to be made her. *Only her sphere was narrow.*" — But is not this to make greatness depend too much on extrinsic accident? That

* Henry IV. was chosen by Voltaire for the hero of his epic poem; and his statue was for a long time respected in France, when those of other kings were destroyed.

sphere is large enough which is rounded with perfection. A Christian queen during her troubled life! A martyr in her exemplary death, hastened, as is too probable, by the black devices of one, as much the opprobrium, as she herself was the glory, of queens, — the execrable plotter of the massacre of Saint Bartholomew! Happy for Catherine di Medici, and for France, of which she was regent during the minority of three kings, had her sphere been as contracted as was that of Jane of Navarre!*

* Nature, perhaps, never produced a more perfect contrast than these two contemporary queens. The intellectual subtilty of Catherine's vices more resembled those of an infernal spirit than of a corrupt woman. She had an exquisite genius for crimes. The arts she employed against those, whose destruction she meditated, were varied, and applied with the nicest appropriation to their case and character; and her success was proportioned to her skill. Power, riches, pleasures, were the baits which she held out, with exact discrimination, to different men according as their tempers inclined them to either. Her deep knowledge of mankind she converted to the purpose of alluring, betraying, and destroying all against whom she had designs; and she had the ingenuity to ruin every one in his own way. She not only watched the vices and weaknesses but the very virtues of men, in order to work with them to their destruction. The excess of a good quality, the elevation of a virtue, was in her hands a better implement for working the ruin of its possessor than even his faults. Her dissimulation was so exquisite, her patience in evil so persevering, that no time appeared too long for nourishing impious projects, and ripening them to perfection. Aware, at length, that that rare combination of deceit and cruelty which met in her character was detected, in order to complete the destruction of the Protestants more signally, her son, a puppet in her hands, was taught to foster

For want of having learned to make a just estimate of the relative value of actions, Louis XIV., while he was laying Flanders waste, and depopulating whole provinces, probably persuaded himself, that he was actuated by pure charity and love of the people, because he carried in his military *calèche* some bags of bread and money, which he distributed, as he passed, to the famished peasantry; beings, whose hunger was caused by his ambition; hunger which the ostentatious distribution of a few loaves and livres could relieve but for a moment. He might have given them peace, and saved his bread. He should have reflected, that the most munificent charities of a prince, commendable as they are in themselves, can be only local and partial; and are almost nothing, in the way of benefit, compared with a deliverance, which it was in his power to have granted them, from the miseries of war. In a prince, to love peace, is to be charitable on a grand scale. The evils which he personally relieves in consequence of their presenting themselves to his senses, highly as that

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and caress them. Two years did this pernicious Italian brood over this plot. * Its dire catastrophe who does not know? Queen Jane was poisoned, as a prologue to this bloody tragedy, a sovereign to whom even the bigotted historians of the popish communion concur in ascribing all that was elegant, accomplished, and pure in woman, with all that was wise, heroic, learned, and intrepid in man!

* For a more detailed character of Catherine, see the Life of Agrippa D'Aubigné.

species of bounty should be rated, must be out of all proportion few, compared with those which never meet his eyes. If, by compassionating the one, he soothes his own feelings, while he forgets the other, only because they are too remote to come in contact with these feelings, his charity is little better than self-love.

CHAP. XXV.

ON ERRONEOUS JUDGMENT. — CHARACTER OF QUEEN CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN. — COMPARISON OF CHRISTINA WITH ALFRED.

NOTHING leads more to false estimates than our suffering that natural desire of happiness, congenial to the human heart, to mislead us by its eagerness. The object in itself is not only natural but laudable; but the steps which are supposed to lead to it, when ill regulated, never attain the end. Vice, of whatever kind, leads to inevitable misery; yet, through a false calculation, even while happiness is intended, vice is pursued. The voluptuous will not be persuaded to set bounds to their indulgences. Thus they commonly destroy both health of body and peace of mind; yet the most voluptuous never *intend* to be miserable. What a necessity hence arises for early infusing right principles, and training to safe and temperate habits, when even the very desire of happiness, if left merely to its instinctive movements, is almost certain to plunge its votary into final and irremediable wretchedness!

But in no instance is the defective judgment, which leads to false estimates, more to be regretted, than in the case of those who apply themselves to pursuits, and affect habits foreign from their station; who spend their season of improvement in

cultivating talents, which they can rarely bring into exercise, to the neglect of those which they are peculiarly called to acquire; who run out of their proper road in pursuit of false fame, while they renounce the solid glory of a real, an attainable, and an appropriate renown.

The danger of a prince often becomes, in this respect, the greater, because, while he sees a path open before him, suppose in the case of the fine arts, by which he beholds others rising into universal notice and celebrity, he feels, perhaps, a natural propensity to the same pursuits, and a consciousness of being able to excel in them. Meanwhile, even his weakest efforts are flattered by those around him, as the sure presages of excellence; and he is easily led to believe, that if he will condescend to enter the lists, he is certain to attain the palm of victory. When we consider the amount of the temptation, we should be almost ready to forgive the Emperor Nero, had it been only in displaying his musical or theatrical talents that he had departed from the line of rectitude. But to see a Roman emperor travelling through Greece in the character of an artist, in order to extort the applauses of a people eminent for their taste, was an indication of farther evils. The infatuation remained to his last hour; for, in his dying moments, instead of thinking how Rome must rejoice to be rid of such a master, he only wondered how the world could submit to the loss of such a performer.

It is one of the many evils which result from in-

dulging such misplaced propensities, that it produces a fatal forgetfulness of all the proper duties of a sovereign, and of his legitimate sphere of emulation. Having once eaten of the forbidden fruit of this meretricious praise, he becomes fonder of the relish, — his taste is corrupted, — his views are lowered, — his ambition is contracted; and indolence conspires with vanity in perpetuating his delusion, and in making him take up with pursuits and gratifications far below the level of his high original.

For a prince, who has formed a just estimate of his own exalted station, will ever bear in mind, that as its rank, its rights, and its privileges, are all of a kind peculiar to itself, so also must be its honours. Providence has laid open to a prince an elevated and capacious field of glory, from which subjects must be ever excluded, by the very circumstances of their civil condition. A prince will but degrade himself, when he descends from this vantage ground, which he naturally occupies, to mix in the competitions of ordinary men. He engages in a contest in which, though failure may disgrace, success cannot do him honour. Monarchs, therefore, would do well to remember, and to improve upon the principle of the dignified reply of Alexander, who being asked whether he would not engage in the competition for the prize at the Olympic games, answered, — "Yes, — if KINGS are to be my competitors." Nor, perhaps, would the high-minded answer of Alcibiades be

unbecoming in a prince, — "It is not for me to give, but to receive delight."

Ever, therefore, let those whose important duty it is to superintend the education of a royal person labour to fix in him a just conception of the *proprieties* of his princely character. Let them teach him how to regulate all his judgments and pursuits by the rule of reason, by a sound and serious estimate of his own condition, and of the *peculiar* duties, excellences, and honours which belong to it, on grounds no less of wisdom than of virtue.

We know not how better to illustrate the nature and confirm the truth of these remarks, than by adducing, as an eminent instance of a contrary kind, the character of Queen Christina of Sweden, the memorable tale of her false judgment, and perverted ambition: — Christina, a woman whose whole character was one mass of contradictions! That same defect in judgment, which, after she had, with vast cost and care, collected some of the finest pictures in Rome, led her to spoil their proportions, by clipping them with shears, till they fitted her apartment, appeared in all she did. It led her, while she thirsted for adulation, to renounce, in abdicating her crown, the means of exacting it. It led her to read almost all books, without digesting any; to make them the theme of her discourse, but not the ground of her conduct. It led her, fond as she was of magnificence, to reduce herself to such a state of indigence, as robbed her of the power of enjoying it. And it was the same incon-

sistency, which made her court the applause of men, eminent for their religious character, while she valued herself on being an avowed infidel.

This royal wanderer roamed from country to country, and from court to court, for the poor purpose of entering the lists with wits, or of discussing knotty points with philosophers; proud of aiming to be the rival of Vossius, when her true merit would have consisted in being his protector. Absurdly renouncing the solid glory of governing well for the sake of hunting after an empty phantom of liberty, which she never enjoyed, and vainly grasping at the shadow of fame, which she never attained.

Nothing is right, which is not in its right place. Disorderly wit, even disorderly virtues, lose much of their natural value. There is an exquisite symmetry and proportion in the qualities of a well-ordered mind. An ill-regulated desire of that knowledge, the best part of which she might have acquired with dignity at her leisure hours; — an unbounded vanity, eager to exhibit to foreign countries those attainments which ought to have been exercised in governing her own; — to be thought a philosopher by wits, and a wit by philosophers; — this was the preposterous ambition of a queen born to rule a brave people, and naturally possessed of talents which might have made that people happy. Thus it was that the daughter of the great Gustavus, who might have adorned that throne for which he so bravely fought, for want of the discretion of a well-balanced mind, and the vir-

tues of a well-disciplined heart, became the scorn of those whose admiration she might have commanded. Her ungoverned tastes were, as is not unusual, connected with passions equally ungovernable; and there is too much ground for suspecting that the mistress of Monaldeschi ended with being his murderer.

It is not surprising, that she who abdicated her throne should abjure her religion. Having renounced every thing else which was worth preserving, she ended by renouncing the Protestant faith.

It may not be without its uses to the royal pupil, to compare the conduct of Christina with that of Alfred, in those points in which they agreed, and those in which they exhibited so striking an opposition. — To contrast the Swede, who, with the advantage of a lettered education, descended from the throne, abandoned the noblest and wisest sphere of action in which the instructed mind could desire to employ its stores, and renounced the highest social duties which a human being can be called to perform, with Alfred, one of the few happy instances in which genius and virtue surmounted the disadvantages of an education so totolly neglected, that at twelve years old he did not even know the letters of the alphabet. *He* did not abdicate his crown, in order to cultivate his own talents, or to gratify his fancy with the talents of others, but laboured, right royally, to assemble around the throne all the abilities of his country. Alfred had no sooner tasted the charms of learning, than his great genius unfolded itself. He was

enchanted with the elegancies of literature to a degree which, at first, seemed likely to divert him from all other objects. But he soon reflected that a prince is not born for himself. When, therefore, he was actually called to the throne, did *he* weakly desert his royal duties, to run into distant lands, to recite Saxon verses, or to repeat that classic poetry of which he became so enamoured? No. Like a true patriot he devoted his rare genius to the noblest purposes. He dedicated the talents of the sovereign to the improvement of the people. He did not renounce his learning when he became a king, but he consecrated it to a truly royal purpose. And while the Swedish vagrant was subsisting on eleemosynary flattery, bestowed in pity to her real but misapplied abilities, Alfred was exercising his talents like the father of his country. He did not consider study as a mere gratification of his own taste. He knew that a king has nothing exclusively his own, not even his literary attainments. He threw his erudition, like his other possessions, into the public stock. He diffused among the people his own knowledge, which flowed in all directions, like streams from their parent fountain, fertilising every portion of the human soil, so as to produce, if not a rapid growth, yet a disposition both for science and virtue, where shortly before there had been a barbarous waste, a complete moral and mental desolation.

CHAP. XXVI.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV. AND ON VOLTAIRE.

If, in the present work, we frequently cite Louis XIV., it is because on such an occasion his idea naturally presents itself. His reign was so long; his character so prominent; his qualities so ostensible; his affairs were so interwoven with those of the other countries of Europe, and especially with those of England; the period in which he lived produced such a revolution in manners; and, above all, his encomiastic historian, Voltaire, has decorated both the period and the king with so much that is great and brilliant, that they fill a large space in the eye of the reader. Voltaire writes as if the *Age of Louis XIV.* bounded the circle of human glory; as if the antecedent history of Europe were among those inconsiderable and obscure annals, which are either lost in fiction, or sunk in insignificance; as if France, at the period he celebrates, bore the same relation to the modern, that Rome did to the ancient world, when she divided the globe into two portions, Romans and barbarians; as if Louis were the central sun from which all the lesser lights of the European firmament borrowed their feeble radiance.

But, whatever other countries may do, England at least is able to look back with triumph to ages

anterior to that which is exclusively denominated the Age of Louis XIV. Nay, in that vaunted age itself we ventured to dispute with France the palm of glory. To all they boast of arms, we need produce no other proof of superiority than that we conquered the boasters. To all that they bring in science, and it must be allowed that they bring much, or where would be the honour of eclipsing them? we have to oppose our Locke, our Boyle, and our Newton. To their long list of wits and of poets, it would be endless, in the way of competition, to attempt enumerating, star by star, the countless constellation which illuminated the bright contemporary reign of Anne.

The principal reason for which we so often cite the conduct, and, in citing the conduct, refer to the errors of Louis, is, that there was a time when the splendour of his character, his imposing magnificence and generosity, made us in too much danger of considering him as a model. The illusion has in a good degree vanished; yet the inexperienced reader is not only still liable, by the dazzling qualities of the king, to be blinded to his vices, but is in danger of not finding out that those very qualities were themselves little better than vices.

But it is not enough for writers, who wish to promote the best interests of the great, to expose *vices*, they should also consider it as part of their duty to strip off the mask from *false virtues*, especially those to which the highly born and the highly flattered are peculiarly liable. To those who are captivated with the shining annals of the ambi-

tious and the magnificent; who are struck with the glories with which the brows of the bold and the prosperous are encircled; such calm unobtrusive qualities as justice, charity, temperance, meekness, and purity, will make but a mean figure, or, at best, will be considered only as the virtues of the vulgar, not as the attributes of kings. While, in the portrait of the conqueror, ambition, sensuality, oppression, luxury, and pride, painted in the least offensive colours, and blended with the bright tints of personal bravery, gaiety, and profuse liberality, will lead the sanguine and the young to doubt whether the former class of qualities *can* be very mischievous, which is so blended and lost in the latter, especially when they find that hardly any abatement is made by the historian for the one while the other is held up to admiration.

There is no family in which the showy qualities have more blinded the reader, and sometimes the writer also, to their vices, than the princes of the house of Medici. The profligate Alexander, the first usurper of the dukedom of Florence, is declared, by one of his historians, Sandoval, *to be a a person of excellent conduct;* and though the writer himself acknowledges his extreme licentiousness, yet he says, "he won the Florentines by his *obliging manners:*" those Florentines whom he not only robbed of their freedom, but dishonoured in the persons of their wives and daughters; his unbounded profligacy not even respecting the sanctity of convents! Another writer, speaking of the house of Medici collectively, says, "their

having restored knowledge and elegance will, in time, obliterate their faults. Their *usurpation, tyranny, pride, perfidy, vindictive cruelty, parricides, and incest, will be remembered no more. Future ages will forget their atrocious crimes in fond admiration!*" * Ought historians to teach such lessons to princes? Ought they to be told that "knowledge and elegance" cannot be bought too dear, though purchased by such atrocious crimes? — The illustrious house of Medici seems to have revived, in every point of resemblance, the Athenian character. With one or two honourable exceptions, it exhibits the same union of moral corruption, with mental taste; the same genius for the arts, and the same neglect of the virtues; the same polish, and the same profligacy; the same passion for learning, and the same appetite for pleasure; the same interchange of spectacles and assassinations; the same preference of the beauty of a statue to the life of a citizen.

So false are the estimates which have ever been made of human conduct; so seldom has praise been justly bestowed in this life; so many wrong actions not only escape censure, but are accounted reputable, that it furnishes one strong argument for a future retribution. This injustice of human judgment led even the pagan Plato, in the person of Socrates, to assign, in an ingenious fiction, a reason why a judgment after death was appointed. He accounts for the necessity of this, by observing, that in a preceeding period each person had been

* Noble's Memoirs of the illustrious House of Medici.

judged in his *lifetime* and by *living judges*; the consequence was, that false judgments were continually passed. The reason of these unjust decisions, he observes, is, that men being judged in the *body*, the blemishes and defects of their *minds* are overlooked, in consideration of their beauty, their high rank, or their riches: and being also surrounded by a multitude who are always ready to extol their virtues, the judges of course are biassed; and being themselves also in a body, their own minds likewise are darkened. It was therefore determined, that men should not be called to their trial till after death, when they shall appear before the judge, himself a pure ethereal spirit, stripped of that body and those ornamental appendages which had misled earthly judges.* The spirit of this fable is as applicable to the age of Louis XIV. as it was to that of Alexander, in which it was written.

Liberality is a truly royal virtue, a virtue, too, which has its own immediate reward in the delight which accompanies its exercise. All wealth is in order to diffusion. If novelty be, as has been said, the great charm of life, there is no way of enjoying it so perfectly as by perpetual acts of beneficence. The great become insensible to the pleasure of their own affluence, from having been long used to it: but, in the distribution of riches, there is always something fresh and reviving; and the opulent add to their own stock of happiness all that their bounty bestows on others. It is pity,

* See Guardian, No. 27.

therefore, on the mere score of voluptuousness, that neither Vitellius nor Eliogabalus, nor any of the other imperial gourmands, was ever so fortunate as to find out this multiplied luxury of "eating with many mouths at once." — Homage must satiate, intemperance will cloy, splendour will fatigue, dissipation exhaust, and adulation surfeit; but the delights of beneficence will be always new and refreshing. And there is no quality in which a prince has it more in his power to exhibit a faint resemblance of that great Being, whose representative he is, than in the capacity and the love of this communicative goodness.

But, it is the perfection of the Christian virtues, that they never intrench on each other. It is a trite remark, yet a remark that requires to be repeated, that liberality loses the very name of virtue, when it is practised at the expense of justice, or even of prudence. It must be allowed, that of all the species of liberality, there is not one more truly royal than that which fosters genius and rewards letters. But the motive of the patron, and the resources from which his bounty is drawn, must determine on the merit of the action. Leo X. has been extolled by all his historians as a prodigy of generosity; a quality, indeed, which eminently distinguished his whole family: but the admiration excited by reading the numberless instances of his munificent spirit in remunerating men of talents, will receive a great drawback, by reflecting that he drew a large part of the resources necessary for his liberality from the scandalous *sale of indul-*

gences. This included not only selling the good works of the saints (of which the church had always an inexhaustible chest in hand), over and above such as were necessary to their own salvation. To any affluent sinner who was rich enough to pay for them, not only a full pardon for all sins past and present of the living offender, but for all that were to come, however great their number or enormous their nature. *

The splendid pontiff earned an immortal fame in the grateful pages of those scholars who tasted of his bounty, while, by this operation of fraud upon folly, the credulous multitude were drained of their money, the ignorant tempted to the boldest impiety, the vicious to the most unbounded profligacy, and the measure of the iniquities of the church of Rome was filled up.

But Louis XIV. carried this honourable generosity to an extent unknown before. He bestowed presents and pensions on no less than sixty men of the most eminent talents and learning in different countries of Europe. One is sorry to be compelled, by truth, to detract from the splendour of such liberality, by two remarks. In the first place, it is notorious, that the bounty originated from his

* This munificent pope, not contented with supplying his own wants by this spiritual traffic, provided also for his relations by setting them up in the same lucrative commerce. His sister Magdalen's portion was derived from the large sphere assigned her for carrying on this merchandise; her warehouse was in Saxony. More distant relations had smaller shops in different provinces, for the sale of this popular commodity.

having learned that Cardinal Richelieu had sent large presents to many learned foreigners who had written panegyrics on him. Who can help suspecting, that the King, less patient or less prudent than the Cardinal, was eager to pay before-hand for his own anticipated panegyrics? Secondly, who can help regretting, that the large sums thus liberally bestowed, had not been partly subtracted from the expense of his own boundless self-gratifications, which were at the same time carried on with a profusion without example? For Louis was contented with bringing into action a sentiment which Nero even ventured to put into words, "that there was no other use of treasure but to squander it." Who can forget that this money had been extorted from the people, by every impost and exaction which Colbert, his indefatigable minister, himself a patron of genius, could devise? How ineffectually does the historian and eulogist of the King labour to vindicate him on this very ground of profusion, from the imputed charge of avarice, by strangely asserting, that a king of France who possesses no income distinct from the revenues of the state, and who only distributes the public money, cannot be accused of covetousness! an apology almost as bad as the imputed crime. For, where is the merit of any liberality which not only subtracts nothing from the gratification of the giver, but which is exercised at the positive expense of the public comfort? *

* The person who now holds the reins of government in a neighbouring nation is said, successfully, to have adopted

Colbert has been even preferred to Sully, for his zeal in diminishing peculation and public abuses. But though Colbert was a very able minister, yet there was a wide difference between his motives of action and those of Sully, and between their application of the public money. But even the profuseness of the extortioner Fouquet, in squandering the revenues of the state as freely as if they had been his own private property, is converted by Voltaire into a proof of the greatness of his soul, because his depredations were spent in acts of munificence and liberality; as if the best possible application of money could atone for injustice or oppression in the acquisition of it!

In how different a mould was the soul of Gustavus Adolphus cast! and how much more correct were the views of that great king as to the true grounds of liberality! As brave a warrior as Charles XII. without his brutal ferocity; as liberal as Louis, without his prodigality; as zealous a patron of letters as Henry VIII. without his vanity! — He was, indeed, so warm a friend to learning,

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similar measures. He early made it his studious care to buy up the good report of authors and men of talents, knowing mankind well enough to be assured, that this was the sure and immediate road to that fame for which he pants. Near spectators instantly detect the fallacy; but strangers, as he foresaw, would mistake the adulation of these bribed witnesses for the general opinion; the assertion of the declaimer for the sentiment of the public. Accordingly, the sycophantry of the journalist has been represented as the voice of the people.

that he erected schools, and founded universities, in the very uproar of war. These he endowed, not by employing his ministers to levy taxes on the distressed people, not by exhausting the resources of the state, meritorious as was the object to be established; but by converting to these noble institutions, almost all *his own* patrimonial lands of the house of Vasa!

Against the principles of Voltaire, it is now scarcely necessary to caution the young reader. His disgrace has become almost as signal as his offences; his crimes seem to have procured for his works their just reprobation. To enter on a particular censure of them might be only to invite our readers to their perusal; and, indeed, a criticism on his philosophical and innumerable miscellaneous writings, pestilential as their general principle is, would be foreign from the present purpose, as there is little danger that the royal pupil should ever be brought within the sphere of their contamination. I shall therefore confine myself to a very few observations on his character of the monarch, in the work under consideration; a work which is still most likely to be read, and which, notwithstanding its faults, perhaps, best deserves a perusal —his Age of Louis the Fourteenth.

In summing up the King's character, he calls his unbounded profligacy in the variety of his mistresses, and the ruinous prodigality with which they were supported, by the cool term of *weakness*. Voltaire again does not blush to compliment a sovereign, whose life was one long tissue of crimi-

nal attachments, with having "uniformly observed the strictest rules of decency and decorum towards his wife." His rancour against the Jansenists; his unjust ambition and arbitrary temper; his wars, which Voltaire himself allows "to have been undertaken without reason;" his cruel ravaging of the Palatinate with fire and sword, and its wretched inhabitants driven for shelter to woods and dens, and caves of the earth; his bloody persecution of the Protestants, — these he calls by the gentle name of *littlenesses;* not forgetting, in the true modern spirit of moral calculation, to place in one scale his admired qualities of whatsoever class, his beauty, valour, taste, generosity, and magnificence; and to throw into the other his crimes and vices, which being assumed to be only *littlenesses* and *weaknesses,* it is no wonder if he glories in the preponderance of his virtues in the balance.

By thus reducing a mass of mischief into almost impalpable frailties, and opposing to them, with enthusiastic rapture, qualities of no real solidity, he holds out a picture of royalty too alluring to the unformed judgment of young and ardent readers, to whom it ought to be explained, that this tinsel is not gold, that *les bienseances* are not virtues, and that graces of manner are a poor substitute for integrity of heart and rectitude of conduct.

By the avowal of the same author, it was in the very lap of pleasure, when all was one unbroken scene of joy, when life was one perpetual course of festive delight, masked balls, pageants, and spec-

tacles, that the Palatinate was twice laid in ashes, the extermination of the Protestants decreed, and the destruction of Holland planned. The latter, not by the sudden ardour of a victorious soldiery, but by a cool deliberate mandate, in a letter under the King's own hand.

Voltaire has expressed his astonishment that these decrees, which he himself allows to have been "cruel and merciless," should proceed from the bosom of a court distinguished for softness of manners, and sunk in voluptuous indulgences. We might rather wonder, at any such expression of astonishment in so ingenious a writer, were we not well assured, that no acuteness of genius can give that deep insight into the human heart, which our religion alone teaches, in teaching us the corruption of our nature; much less can it inspire the infidel with that quickness of moral taste, which enables the true disciples of Christianity to appreciate, as if by a natural instinct, human characters.

It is, indeed, obvious to all who have sound views of religion, and a true knowledge of mankind, that this cruelty, so far from being inconsistent with, actually sprung from, that very spirit of voluptuousness, which, by concentrating all feeling into *self*, totally hardens the heart to the happiness of others. Who does not know that a soul dissolved in sensual pleasure is naturally dead to all compassion, and all kindness, which has not fame, or interest, or self-gratification, for its object? Who are they of whom the prophet declares, that "they are not moved by the affliction of their

brethren?" — It is they "who lie in beds of ivory, that chant to the sound of the viol, that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with ointments." Selfishness was the leading charge brought by the Apostle against the enemies of religion. It stands foremost in that catalogue of sins assigned by him as the mark of the apostate times, that *men should be lovers of their ownselves.*

But even without this divine teaching, Voltaire might have been informed by general history, of which he was not only an universal reader, but an universal writer, of the natural connection between despotism and licentiousness. The annals of all nations bear their concurrent testimony to this glaring truth. It would be endless to enumerate exemplifications of it from the melancholy catalogue of Roman emperors. Nero, who claims among the monarchs of the earth the execrable precedency in cruelty, was scarcely less pre-eminent in voluptuousness. Tiberius was as detestable for profligacy at Caprea, as infamous for tyranny at Rome. In the history of the Mohammedan kings, barbarity and self-indulgence generally bear a pretty exact proportion to each other. Sensuality and tyranny equally marked the character of our eighth Henry. Shall we then wonder, if, under Louis, feasts at Versailles, which eclipsed all former splendour, and decorations at Trianon and Marli, which exhausted art and beggared invention, were the accompaniments to the flight, despair, and execution of the Hugonots? So

exactly did luxury keep pace with intolerance, and voluptuousness with cruelty.

Even many of the generally admired qualities of Louis, which assumed the air of more solid virtues, were not sterling. His resolution and spirit of perseverance were nothing better than that obstinacy and self-sufficiency, which are the common attributes of ordinary characters. Yet, this pride and stubbornness were extolled in the measure they were persisted in, and in proportion to the evils of which they were the cause; and his parasites never failed to elevate these defects to the dignity of fortitude, and the praise of firmness.

CHAP. XXVII.

FARTHER OBSERVATIONS ON LOUIS XIV. — AN EXAMINATION OF THE CLAIMS OF THOSE PRINCES WHO HAVE OBTAINED THE APPELLATION OF *THE GREAT*.

In considering the character of Louis XIV. in the foregoing chapter, we are led, by the imposing appellation of THE GREAT, which has been conferred on this monarch, to enquire how far a passion for shows and pageants; a taste for magnificence and the polite arts; a fondness for war, the theatre of which he contrived to make a scene of the most luxurious accommodation, together with a profuse and undistinguishing liberality, entitled Louis to that appellation, which should seem to imply the possession of all the heroic qualities, of which he appears to have been utterly destitute.

We are aware, that the really heroic virtues are growing into general disesteem. *The age of chivalry is gone!* said a great genius of our own time; one who laboured, though with less effect, to raise the spirit of true chivalry, as much as Cervantes had done to lay the false. "The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone!" *

* We cannot pass over the brilliant passage of Mr. Burke, of which this is a part, without hazarding a censure on the

Selfishness is scarcely more opposite to true religion than to true gallantry. Men are not fond of establishing a standard so much above ordinary practice. Selfishness is become so predominant a principle, especially among the rich and luxurious, that it gives the mind an uneasy sensation to look up to models of exalted and disinterested virtue. Habits of indulgence cloud the spiritual faculties, and darken those organs of mental vision which should contemplate truth with unobstructed distinctness. Thus, in characters which do not possess one truly heroic virtue, superficial qualities are blindly adopted as substitutes for real grandeur of mind.

But, in pursuing our enquiry into the claims of those princes who have acquired the title of THE GREAT, many difficulties occur. It requires, not only clearness of sight, but niceness of position to enable us to determine. Perhaps the fifty years which the church of Rome wisely ordained should elapse, before she allows enquiries to be made into the characters of her intended saints, previous to

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sentiment which closes it. He winds up the paragraph by asserting, that, under the old system, "vice itself lost half its evils by losing all its grossness." Surely one of the great dangers of vice is its *attractiveness*. Now, is not grossness rather repulsive than attractive? So thought the Spartans when they exposed their drunken slaves to the eyes of their children. Had Mr. Burke said, that those who add grossness make it more odious, it would have been just. Not so, when he declares, that its absence mitigates the evil.

their canonization, pass away to an opposite purpose in the case of ambitious princes; and the same period which is required to make a saint would, probably, unmake a hero, and thus annul the posthumous possession of that claim which many living kings have put in for the title of *the great.*

From all that we are able to collect of the annals of so obscure a period, it must be allowed that the Emperor Charlemagne appears to have had higher claims to this appellation, than many on whom we have been accustomed to bestow it. But, while this illustrious conqueror gallantly defeated the renowned pagan prince and his Saxons; while he overthrew their temples, destroyed their priests, and abolished their worship; — while he made kings in one country, and laws in another; — while he seems to have governed with justice, as well his hereditary realms as those which he obtained by the sword; — while, in a subsequent engagement with the same pagan prince, he not only obtained fresh conquests, but achieved the nobler victory of bringing his captive to embrace Christianity, and to become its zealous defender; — while he vigorously executed in time of peace those laws which he enacted even in the tumult of war; — and while he was the great restorer and patron of letters, though he could not write his name; — and while, as Alfred is the boast of the English for having been the founder of their constitution by some of his laws, so the French ascribe to Charlemagne the glory of having suggested, by those

learned conferences which he commanded to be held in his presence, the first idea of their academies of sciences and letters; — while he seemed to possess the true notion of royal magnificence, by employing it chiefly as a political instrument*; and though, for his various merits, the ancient Romans would have deified him, and the French historians seem to have done little less; — yet this destroyer of paganism, this restorer of learning, this founder of cities, laws, schools, colleges, and churches, by the unprovoked murder of near five thousand Saxons, for no crime but their allegiance to their own legitimate prince, must ever stand excluded by the Christian censor, from a complete and unqualified right to the appellation of *the great*; — a title to which the pretensions of our Alfred seem to have been, of all princes, the least questionable.

Nor can we dismiss the character of Charlemagne without producing him as a fresh instance of the political mischief arising from the private vices of princes. The licentiousness of this monarch's conduct proved an irreparable injury to the state, the number of natural children which he left behind him being the occasion of long contentions respecting the division of the empire.

In not a few respects the Emperor Charles V. possesses a considerable claim to the name of Great, while yet there is an invincible flaw in his

* See the extraordinary account of Charlemagne's splendid reception of the ambassadors from the Emperor of the East.

title. So eminent in the field as to have equalled the most skilful, and to have vanquished the most successful generals of his age. So able in the cabinet, that he formed his plans with as much wisdom, deliberation, and foresight, as he afterwards executed them with promptitude and vigour; and constantly manifesting a prudence which secured his superiority over his pleasure-loving contemporaries, the unguarded Francis and the jovial Henry. But his principal claim to greatness arises from that species of wisdom, which his admirable historian allows him to have possessed in the highest degree; that science which, of all others, is the most important in a monarch, "the exact knowledge of mankind, and the great art of adapting their talents to the departments to which he allotted them. So that he employed," continues Robertson, "no general in the field, no minister in the cabinet, no ambassador to a foreign court, no governor of a province, whose abilities were inadequate to the trust reposed in him." Yet, the grandeur of Charles consisted entirely in the capacity of his mind, without any consonant qualities of the heart. And it was the misfortune of this renowned politician and warrior to fail of the character of true greatness, alike when he pursued, and when he renounced, human glory; to err, both when he sought happiness in the turmoil of war and politics, and when he at last looked for it, in the quiet shelter of religious retreat. In the latter, his object was indeed far more pure; but his pursuit was almost equally mistaken. In the

bustling scenes of life, he was sullen, cruel, insidious, malignant: the terror of mankind by his ambition, the scourge of protestantism by his intolerance. In his solitude, he was the tormentor of himself, by unhappily mistaking superstitious observances for repentance, and uncommanded austerities for religion.

Who can figure to himself a more truly pitiable state than that of a capacious mind, which, after a long possession of the plenitude of power, and an unbounded field for the indulgence of ambition, begins to discover the vanity of its loftiest aims, and actually resolves to renounce its pursuits, but without substituting in its stead any nobler object, without replacing the discarded attachment with any better pursuit, or any higher hope? To abandon what may almost be called the empire of this world, without a well-grounded expectation of happiness in the world to come! To renounce the full-blown honours of earthly glory, without any reasonable hope of that glory which fadeth not away; this perhaps is, of all human conditions, that which excites the deepest commiseration in the bosom of a Christian!

There are few things which more strikingly evince the value of true religion than the despondency and misery experienced by great but perverted minds, when, after a long and successful course of ambition, they are thus brought to a deep feeling of its emptiness. Alexander weeping for more worlds! Dioclesian weary of that imperial power which had been exercised in acts of tyranny

and persecution; abdicating his throne, and retiring to labour in a little garden at Salona, forgetting that solitude requires innocence to make it pleasant, and piety to make it profitable! And though the retreat was voluntary, and though he deceived himself in the first moments of novelty, by declaring that he found more pleasure in cultivating cabbages than in governing Rome, yet he soon gave the lie to this boast, by terminating his life in a way more congenial to the manner in which it had been spent, by poison, or madness, or, as some assert, by both! — The Emperor Charles, after having for a long series of years alarmed and agitated Europe by his restless ambition, yet, just when its objects were accomplished, flying to a gloomy retreat, devoting himself to severe austerities and useless self-discipline, and mournfully acting the weak but solemn farce of his own living funeral!

How does the reflecting mind regret that these great but misguided princes, Charles especially, in whose heart deep remorse seems to have been awakened, should fail finally of that only consolation which could have poured balm into their aching bosoms, and administered relief to their lacerated consciences! Had Charles, instead of closing his days with ignorant and bigoted monks, been surrounded by enlightened Christians, they would have prevented his attempting to heal his wounded spirit by fruitless and unexpiating self-inflictions. Instead of "laying this flattering unction to his soul," he might have been led to sound and rational repentance. His weary and heavy-

laden spirit might have been conducted thither, where alone true rest is to be found. He might have been directed to the only sure source of pardon for sin, and have closed his guilty and perturbed life with a hope full of immortality. Peace might have been restored to his mind, not by lessening his sense of his own offences, but on the only true ground, by exalting the mercies of God, as displayed in the Christian dispensation.

It must be confessed, however, that there seems to be something sublime in the motive of his abdication, as far as related to himself. Yet, might he not far better have made his peace with Heaven, by remaining on a throne where he would have retained the power of making some compensation to the world for the wrongs which he had done it; and of holding out his protection to the reformed faith, of which he had been so unrelenting an enemy, and to which his dying sentiments are suspected to have been favourable?

From a view of such striking examples, one important lesson is held out to princes, in the bloom of life, who have yet their path to choose in the world that lies before them. It is this: — Though it is good to repent of ambition and injustice, it is still better never to have been guilty of either.

If we were to estimate the true greatness of a prince, not so much by the virtues attached to his own personal character, as by the effects which the energy of that character produced on the most enormous empire in the world, there is,

perhaps, no monarch, ancient or modern, who could produce a fairer claim to the title of great than Peter the First, Emperor of Russia. It was said of Augustus, that he had found Rome built of brick, and had left it of marble. It may be said, with more truth of Peter, that he found Muscovy a land of savages, and left it a land of men; of beings at least rapidly advancing, in consequence of his exertions, to that character.

This monarch early gave many of those sure indications of a great capacity, which consist in catching from the most trivial circumstances hints for the most important enterprises. The casual sight of a Dutch vessel, from a summer-house on one of his lakes, suggested at once to his creative mind the first idea of the navy of Russia. The accidental discourse of a foreigner, of no great note, in which he intimated that there were countries in a state of knowledge, light, and comfort, totally dissimilar to the barbarism and misery of Russia, kindled in the Czar an instantaneous wish to see and judge of this difference for himself; not merely as a matter of curiosity, but with a resolution to bring home whatever advantages he might find abroad. With the same instinctive greatness, his natural dread of the sea, which was extreme, was made at once to give way, when voyages of improvement were to be made abroad, or a marine established at home.

Having resolved to procure for his country this necessary instrument of strength and defence, a

navy; fired by true genius and genuine patriotism, he quitted for a time his throne and country, not like Sesostris, Alexander, or Cæsar, to despoil other nations, but to acquire the best means of improving his own. Not like Nero, to fiddle to the Athenians; not like Dioclesian, to raise coleworts in Dalmatia; not like Charles V., to bury himself in a monastic cell in Spain, torturing his body for the sins of his soul; not like Christina, to discuss at Rome, and intrigue at Versailles; — but having formed the grand design of giving laws, civilisation, and commerce to his vast unwieldy territory, — and being aware that the brutal ignorance of his barbarous subjects wanted to be both stimulated and instructed, — he quitted his throne for a time, only that he might return more worthy to fill it. He travelled, not to feast his eyes with pictures or his ears with music, nor to dissolve his mind in pleasures, but to study laws, politics, and arts. Not only to scrutinise men and manners with the eye of a politician, which would have sufficed for a monarch of a polished state; but, remembering that he reigned over a people rude, even in the arts of ordinary life, he magnanimously stooped, not only to study, but to practise them himself. He not only examined docks and arsenals with the eye of an engineer, but laboured in them with the hand of a mechanic. He was a carpenter in Holland, a shipwright in Britain, a pilot in both. His pleasures had a relish of his labours. The King of England, apprised of his taste, entertained him, not with a masquerade, but a naval

combat. Previous to this, he had entered upon his military career in Russia, where he set out by taking the lowest situation in his own regiment, and would accept of no rank but as he obtained it by deserving it. Accordingly, he filled successively every station in the army from the drummer to the general; intending hereby to give his proud and ignorant nobility a living lesson, that desert was the only true road to military distinctions.

We must not determine on the greatness of a sovereign's character entirely by the degree of civilisation, morals, and knowledge, which his people may be found to have reached after his death; but, in order to do full justice to his character, we must exactly appreciate the state in which he found, as well as that in which he left, them. For though they may be still far behind the subjects of neighbouring states, yet that measure of progress which they will have made, under such a monarch as Peter, will reflect greater honour on the king than will be due to the sovereign of a much more improved people, who finds them already settled in habits of decency and order, and in an advanced state of arts, manners, and knowledge.

The genius of Peter was not a visionary genius, indulging romantic ideas of chimerical perfection, but it was a great practical understanding, realising by its energy whatever his genius had conceived. Patient under difficulties, cheerful even under the loss of battles, from the conviction that the rough implements, with which he must

hereafter work his way to victory, could only learn to conquer by being first defeated, he considered every action in which he was worsted as a school for his barbarians. It was this perseverance under failures which paved the way for the decisive victory at Pultowa, the consummation of his military character. His conduct to the Swedish officers, his prisoners, was such as would have done honour to a general of the most polished state.

He manifested another indisputable proof of greatness in his constant preference of utility to splendour, and in his indifference to show and decoration. The qualities which this prince threw away, as beneath the attention of a great mind, were precisely such as a tinsel hero would pick up, on which to build the reputation of greatness. The shreds and parings of Peter would make a Louis.

With this truly vigorous and original mind, with an almost unparalleled activity and zeal, constantly devoted to all the true ends which a patriot king will ever keep in view — it is yet but too obvious, why the Emperor Peter failed of completely deserving the title of *the great.* This monarch presents a fresh exemplification of the doctrine which we have so frequently brought forward, the use which Providence makes of erring men to accomplish great purposes. He affords a melancholy instance how far a prince "may reform a people without reforming himself." A remark, indeed, which Peter had the

honesty and good sense to make, but without having the magnanimity to profit by his own observation. Happy for society, that such instruments are raised up! Happy were it for themselves, if a still higher principle directed their exertions; and if, in so essentially serving mankind, they afforded a reasonable ground of hope that they had saved themselves!

This monarch, who, like Alexander, perpetuated his name by a superb city which he built; who refined barbarism into policy; who so far tamed the rugged genius of an almost polar clime, as not only to plant arts and manufactures, but colleges, academies, libraries, and observatories, in that frozen soil, which had hitherto scarcely given any signs of intellectual life! — who improved, not only the condition of the people, but the state of the church, and considerably raised its religion, which was before scarcely Christianity; — this founder, this patriot, this reformer, was himself intemperate, and violent, sensual, and cruel, — a slave to passions and appetites as gross as could have been indulged by the rudest of his Muscovites before he had civilised them!

If the true grandeur of a prince consists not in adding to his territory by conquest; not in enriching it by plunder; not in adorning it by treasures wrung from the hard hand of industry; but in converting a neglected waste into a cultivated country; in peopling and rendering fruitful a land desolated by long calamities; in preserving peace in his small state, when all the great states of

Europe were ravaged by war; in restoring plenty to a famished people, and raising a depressed nobility to affluence; in paying the debts of a ruined gentry, and giving portions to their daughters; in promoting virtue, literature, and science; in making it the whole object of his reign to render his subjects richer, happier, and better than he found them; in declaring that *he would not reign a moment longer than he thought he could be doing good to his people;* — then was Leopold, sovereign of the small dukedom of Lorrain, more justly entitled to the appellation of *the great*, than the Alexanders, the Cæsars, and the Louis's, who filled the page of history with praises, and the world with tears. *

If Gustavus Adolphus puts in his undisputed claim to the title of *the great*, it is not merely on the ground of his glorious victories at the battles of Leipsic and of Lützen; but because that, amidst the din of arms and the tumult of those battles, he was never diverted from snatching some portion of every day for prayer, and reading the Scriptures. It is because, with all his high spirit, he was so far from thinking it derogated from the dignity of a gentleman, or the honour of an officer, to refuse a challenge, that he punished with death whoever presumed to decide a quarrel with the sword; to prevent the necessity of which he made a law, that all disputes should be settled

* See Siècle de Louis XIV. for a fuller account of Leopold.

by a court of honour. * He deserved the appellation of *great* when he wished to carry commerce to the West Indies, that he might carry thither also by those means the pure doctrines of the Reformation. He deserved it, when he invited by an edict all the persecuted Protestants from every part of Europe to an asylum in Sweden, offering them not only an immunity from taxes, but full permission to return home when the troubles of their respective countries should be healed.

When such was the union of piety and heroism in the gallant monarch himself, it was the less wonderful to find the same rare combination in the associates of his triumphs. Hence, the pious *Meditations* of the celebrated leader of the Scotch brigade † in the service of Gustavus! Compositions which would be scarcely a discredit to a father of the church, and which exalt his character as highly in a religious and moral view as it was raised, by his bravery and skill in war, in the annals of military glory.

If Alexander deserved the title in question, it was when he declared, in a letter to his immortal master, that *he thought it a truer glory to excel in*

* The King of France, at this same military period, severely prohibited duelling, the practice of which he was so far from considering as an indication of courage, that he took a solemn oath to bestow rewards on such military men as had THE COURAGE TO REFUSE A CHALLENGE. It was an indication, that this Prince understood wherein true magnanimity consisted. See also Sir Francis Bacon's *charge*, when attorney-general, against duels.

† Monro.

knowledge than in power. It was in that equally moral and poetical reprehension of those flatterers who had ascribed divine honours to him, when, on the bleeding of his wounds, he said, *Look! this is my blood! This is not that divine liquor of which Homer speaks, which ran from the hand of Venus when Diomedes pierced it!* His generous treatment of the family of the conquered Darius was, perhaps, eclipsed by the equally magnanimous, and more disinterested moderation of our own heroic Edward the Black Prince to the captive King of France. This gallant prince seems to have merited, without obtaining, the appellation of *the great.*

But, if splendid parade and costly magnificence be really considered as unequivocal proofs of exalted greatness, then must the Trajans, the Gustavus's, the Alfreds, the Peters, the Williams, and the Elizabeths, submit their claims to this appellation to those of Louis XIV. Louis himself must, without contest, yield the palm of greatness to Pope Alexander the Sixth and Cæsar Borgia; and they, in their turn, must hide their diminished heads, in reverence to the living exhibitor of the late surpassing pomp and unparalleled pageantry in a neighbouring nation, displayed in the most gorgeous and costly farce that was ever acted before the astonished and indignant world!

If, to use the very words of the historian and panegyrist of Louis, "to despoil, disturb, and humble almost all the states of Europe," — if this appeared in the eyes of that panegyrist a proof of

greatness; in the eye of reason and humanity, such a course of conduct will rather appear insolence, injustice, and oppression. Yet, as such irreligious authors commonly connect the idea of glory with that of success, they themselves ought not to vindicate it even on their own principle of *expediency*; since this passion for false glory, carried to the last excess, became, at length, the means of stirring up the other European powers; the result of whose confederacy terminated in the disgrace of Louis.

If ever this vain-glorious prince appeared truly *great*, it was in his dying speech to his infant successor, when, taking him in his arms, he magnanimously entreated him not to follow his example, in his love of wars and his taste for expense; exhorting him to follow moderate counsels, to fear God, reduce the taxes, spare his subjects, and to do whatever he himself had not done to relieve them.

In like manner, our illustrious Henry V. in the midst of his French conquests, conquests founded on injustice (unpopular as is the assertion to an English ear), never so truly deserved to be called *the great*, as in that beautiful instance of his reverence for the laws, when he submitted, as Prince of Wales, to the magistrate who put him under confinement for some irregularities; as when, afterwards, being sovereign, he not only pardoned but commended and promoted him.

If ever Henry IV. of France peculiarly deserved the appellation of *great*, it was after the victory at

Coutras, for that noble magnanimity in the very moment of conquest, which compelled a pious divine, then present, to exclaim, — "Happy and highly favoured of heaven is that prince, who sees at his feet his enemies humbled by the hand of God; his table surrounded by his prisoners, his room hung with the ensigns of the vanquished, without the slightest emotion of vanity or insolence! who can maintain, in the midst of such glorious successes, the same moderation with which he has borne the severest adversity!" He deserved it, when as he was besieging Paris, which was perishing with famine, he commanded the besiegers to admit supplies to the besieged. He deserved it at the battle of Ivri, not when he gallantly ordered his soldiers to follow his white plume, which would be the signal of victory, nor afterwards, when that victory was complete; but it was when, just before the engagement, he made a solemn renunciation of his own might and his own wisdom, and submitted the event to God in this incomparable prayer: —

"O Lord God of Hosts, who hast in thy hand all events; if thou knowest that my reign will promote thy glory, and the safety of thy people; if thou knowest that I have no other ambition, but to advance the honour of thy name, and the good of the state, favour, O great God, the justice of my arms. But if thy good providence has decreed otherwise; if thou seest that I should prove one of those kings whom thou givest in

thine anger, take from me, O merciful God, my life and my crown. Make me this day a sacrifice to thy will: let my death end the calamities of my country; and let my blood be the last that shall be spilt in this quarrel." —

O si sic Omnia!

CHAP. XXVIII.

BOOKS.

"CONVERSATION," says the sagacious Verulam, "makes a *ready* man." It is, indeed, one of the practical ends of study; it draws the powers of the understanding into exercise, and brings into circulation the treasures which the memory has been amassing. Conversation will be always an instrument particularly important in the cultivation of those talents which may one day be brought into public exercise. And as it would not be easy to start profitable topics of discourse between the pupil and those around her, without inventing some little previous introduction, it might not be useless to suggest a simple preparation for the occasional discussion of topics somewhat above the ordinary cast of familiar intercourse.

To burden the memory with a load of dry matter would, on the one hand, be dull; and with a mass of poetry, which she can have little occasion to use, would, on the other, be superfluous. But as the understanding opens, and years advance, might she not occasionally commit to memory, from the best authors in every department, one select passage, one weighty sentence, one striking precept, which, in the hours devoted to society and relaxation, might form a kind of thesis for interesting conversation? For instance, a short specimen

of eloquence from South, or of reasoning from Barrow; a detached reflection on the analogy of religion to the constitution of nature from Butler; a political character from Clarendon; a maxim of prudence from the Proverbs; a precept of government from Bacon; a moral document from the Rambler; a passage of ancient history from Plutarch; a sketch of national manners from Goldsmith's Traveller, or of individual character from the Vanity of Human Wishes; an aphorism on the contempt of riches from Seneca, or a paragraph on the wealth of nations from Adam Smith; a rule of conduct from Sir Matthew Hale, or a sentiment of benevolence from Mr. Addison; a devout contemplation from Bishop Hall, or a principle of taste from Quintilian; an opinion on the law of nations from Vattel, or on the law of England from Blackstone.

Might not any one of the topics, thus suggested by the recitation of a single passage, be made the ground of a short rational conversation, without the formality of debate, or the solemnity of an academical disputation? Persons naturally get a custom of reading with more sedulous attention, when they expect to be called upon to produce the substance of what they have read; and in order to prevent desultory and unsettled habits, it would be well on these occasions to tie the mind down to the one selected topic, and not to allow it to wander from the point under consideration. This practice, steadily observed, would strengthen the faculties of

thinking and reasoning, and, consequently, highly improve the powers of conversation.

Of books a considerable number, besides those in the foregoing passage, has already been suggested. But though we have ventured to recommend many works which seemed peculiarly applicable to the present purpose, we do not presume to point out any thing like a systematic course of reading. This will be arranged by far abler judges, especially in that most important instance, the choice of books of divinity. In a language so abounding as the English with the treasures of theological composition the difficulty will consist, not in finding much that is excellent, but in selecting that which unites the most excellences.

Of elementary books which teach the first rudiments of Christianity, there is no doubt but the best use has been already made. In aid of these, the deepest and most impressive knowledge will be communicated to the mind, by familiar colloquial explanation of every portion of Scripture, daily as it is read. Such an habitual, and, at the same time, clear and simple exposition, would tend to do away the most material of those difficulties and obscurities with which the sacred writings are charged, and which are commonly pleaded as a reason for not putting them, in their genuine form, into the hands of youth. There is no book whatever which affords more matter for interesting and animated conversation; and for variety, there is no book which is at all comparable to it. It were to be wished, that the sacred volume

were not too generally made to give way to histories and expositions of the Bible. These last are excellent subordinate aids; but it is to be feared that they are sometimes almost exclusively adopted, to the neglect of the Bible itself. Thus the mere facts and incidents being retained, separated from the doctrines, sentiments, and precepts, which, like a golden thread, run through every part of the history, and are every where interwoven with its texture; and the narrative being also stripped of its venerable phraseology and touching style, the Bible is robbed of its principal charm; and the devotional and historical ideas being thus separated, the impression, both on the memory and the feelings, becomes much weakened. — Our remarks on the Scripture itself we shall reserve for a future chapter.

It has been a rule observed throughout this work, to forbear naming living authors, except incidentally in one or two instances. This rule, which was adopted from delicacy, is at present become inconvenient, as it prevents our giving highly merited commendation to various religious works, of almost every description; to critical as well as practical elucidations of Scripture; — to treatises on the internal principles, and on the duties of religion; on the efficacy, as well as the evidences, of Christianity; works not less admirable, in point of composition, than estimable for their substantial worth; and which will inevitably be adopted, as the royal education advances.

We would only presume to offer one remark on

the study of divines, whether ancient or modern. A luminous style, and a perspicuous expression, will cast a lustre on the brightest truths, and render grave and serious subjects more engaging and impressive. To the young, these attractions are particularly necessary. Yet, in the discourses to be perused, one principle of selection should be observed. The graces of language should never be considered as an equivalent for a sound principle. Dissertations or sermons should not be preferred for having more smoothness than energy, for being more alluring than awakening, nor because they are calculated to make the reader satisfied rather than safe. The distinguishing characters of Christianity both in doctrine and practice, should always be considered as the most indispensable requisite. For the absence of the great fundamental truths of our religion, no ingenuity of thought, no elegance of style, no popularity of the author can atone. A splendid diction is a pleasing ornament, but it should never be used as an instrument for lowering the standard of religious truth. Happily we are not wanting in divines, living and dead, who unite all the required excellences.

Of moral writers we shall speak hereafter. — Next to history, biography must be considered as useful. Those who have properly selected and judiciously written the lives of eminent persons have performed the office of instruction, without assuming the dignity of instructors. Well-chosen and well-written lives would form a valuable substitute for no small portion of those works of ima-

gination which steal away the hearts and time of our youth. Novels, were there no other objection to them, however ingeniously they may be written, as they exhibit only fictitious characters, acting in fictitious scenes, on fictitious occasions, and being sometimes the work of writers who rather *guess* what the world is than describe it from their own knowledge, can never give so just or vivid a picture of life and manners, as is to be found in the memoirs of men who were actual performers on the great stage of the world. We may apply to many of these fabricators of adventures what Lord Bacon says, when he regrets that philosophers, ignorant of real business, chose to write about legislation, instead of statesmen, whose proper office it was. — "They make," says he, "imaginary laws for imaginary commonwealths."

Of this engaging species of literature, biography, it is to be regretted, that we do not possess more lives of distinguished men, written with a view to moral instruction, in the manner of those of Bishop Burnet and Isaac Walton. The lives of the Bishop are seriously instructive, as well as highly interesting. Of Walton's, it is difficult to say whether they are more amusing or informing.

Voyages and travels also will form a very necessary class of books; but some of the more recent works of this kind are so interlarded with infidelity, and, under the mask of ridiculing popery, aim such mischievous side-strokes at Christianity itself; and many, especially of the modern French travels, are exceptionable, not only for their impiety, but also

on so many other accounts, that they will require to be selected with the nicest discrimination. Our own language, however, can boast many valuable works of this kind, which are clear of these offences. Voyages of discovery, though perhaps less interesting to ordinary readers, will be peculiarly suited to the royal pupil; especially those which have been undertaken, greatly to his honour, by command of His present Majesty, and which contain the discoveries actually made in the hitherto unexplored parts of the southern hemisphere.

TELEMACHUS.

Among works of imagination, there are some peculiarly suited to the royal pupil. She should never, it is presumed, peruse any authors below those who have always been considered as standards in their respective departments. With the talents which she is said to possess, she will soon be competent to understand great part of a work, which, though it ranks in the very first class of this species of composition, has, it is to be feared, fallen into unjust disregard, from its having been injudiciously employed by teachers as the first book in acquiring the French language. The fine sentiments which it contains have been overlooked, while only the facility of the style has been considered. Telemachus is a noble political romance, delightful to every reader, but specifically adapted to what indeed was its original object, the formation of the character of a prince. It is free from the moral defects of the classic poets, whose very deities

are commonly exhibited with a grossness dangerous to the modesty of youth. Fenelon, while, with a true taste, he never puts any thing into their mouths incompatible with the Grecian fable, never fails to give the imperfect pagan moral a tincture of Christian purity. The finest precepts are illustrated by the most instructive examples; and every royal duty is, as it were, personified. His morality is every where founded on the eternal principles of truth and justice. He refers all goodness to God, as its origin and end. He exhibits a uniform lesson of the duty of sacrificing private interest to public good, and of forgetting ourselves in the love of our country. He reconciles the soundest policy with the most undeviating integrity, and puts to shame those, otherwise admirable writers of our own time, who have laboured to establish the dangerous doctrine of *expediency* at the expense of immutable justice and everlasting truth. From Telemachus she will learn, that the true glory of a king is to make his people good and happy; that his authority is never so secure as when it is founded on the love of his subjects; and that the same principles which promote private virtue advance public happiness. He teaches carefully to distinguish between good and bad governments; delivers precepts for the philosophical, the warlike, the pacific, and the legislative king; and shows the comparative value of agriculture, of commerce, of education, and of arts; of private justice, and of civil polity. His descriptions, comparisons, and narratives, instead of being merely amusing, are always made to answer

some beneficial purpose. And, as there is no part of public duty, so there is scarcely any circumstance of private conduct, which has been overlooked. The dangers of self-confidence; the contempt of virtuous counsels; the perils of favouritism; the unworthiness of ignoble pursuits; the mischiefs of disproportionate connections; the duty of inviolable fidelity to engagements, of moderation under the most prosperous, and of firmness under the most adverse, circumstances; of patience and forbearance, of kindness and gratitude: — all these are not so much animadverted on, as exemplified in the most impressive instances.

Children love fiction. It is often a misleading taste. Of this taste Fenelon has availed himself, to convey, under the elegant shelter of the Greek mythology, sentiments and opinions which might not otherwise so readily have made their way to the heart. The strict maxims of government, and high standard of public virtue, exhibited in Telemachus, excited in the jealous mind of the reigning king of France a dread, that if those notions should become popular, that work would hereafter be considered as a satire on his own conduct and government, on his fondness for grandeur, for pleasure, for glory, and for war; so that it has been supposed probable, that Fenelon's theological works, for which he was disgraced, were only made the pretext for punishing him for his political writings.

The Cyropædia of Xenophon it may be thought out of date to recommend; but genius and virtue

are never antiquated. This work may be read with advantage, not as an entirely authentic history, which is a more than doubtful point, but as a valuable moral work, exhibiting a lively image of royal virtue, and showing, in almost all respects, what a sovereign ought to be. The *Princes* of Xenophon and of Fenelon are models. The "Prince" of Machiavel is a being elaborately trained in every art of political and moral corruption. The lives of the pupils are the best comment on the works of the respective authors. — Fenelon produced "Telemaque" and the Duke of Burgundy. — Machiavel, "Il Principe" and Cæsar Borgia!

CHAP. XXIX.

OF PERIODICAL ESSAY WRITERS, PARTICULARLY ADDISON AND JOHNSON.

To hardly any species of composition has the British public been more signally indebted than to the periodical essay; and, perhaps, it was only from the British press that such a publication could have issued. The attempt to excite mental appetite, by furnishing, from day to day, intellectual aliment of such peculiar freshness, must have been fatally obstructed by any jealousy of superintendence, or formality of licensing. The abuse of the press is to be deplored as a calamity, and punished as a crime. But let neither prince nor people forget the providential blessings which have been derived to both from its constitutional liberty. As this was one of the invaluable effects of the Revolution in 1688, so, perhaps, no other means more contributed to carry the blessings of that period to their consummate establishment in the accession of the house of Brunswick.

The two writers who have most eminently distinguished themselves in this path of literature, are Addison and Johnson. At a period when religion was held in more than usual contempt, from its having been recently abused to the worst purposes; and when the higher walks of life still exhibited that dissoluteness which the profligate

reign of the second Charles had made so deplorably fashionable, Addison seems to have been raised by Providence for the double purpose of improving the public taste, and correcting the public morals. As the powers of the imagination had, in the preceding period, been peculiarly abused to the purposes of vice, it was Addison's great object to show that wit and impurity had no necessary connection. He not only evinced this by his reasonings, but he so exemplified it in his own compositions, as to become in a short time more generally useful, by becoming more popular than any English writer who had yet appeared. This well-earned celebrity he endeavoured to turn to the best of all purposes; and his success was such as to prove, that genius is never so advantageously employed as in the service of virtue, nor influence so well directed as in rendering piety fashionable. At this distance, when almost all authors have written the better because Addison wrote first, and when the public taste which he refined has become competent, through that refinement, to criticise its benefactor, it is not easy fully to appreciate the value of Addison. To do this, we must attend to the progress of English literature, and make a comparison between him and his predecessors.

But noble as the views of Addison were, and happily as he has, in general, accomplished what he intended, the praise which justly belongs to him must be qualified by the avowal, that it does not extend to every passage which he has written.

From the pernicious influence of those very manners which it was his object to correct, some degree of taint has occasionally affected his own pages, which will make it necessary to guard the royal pupil from a wholly promiscuous perusal. It is, however, but justice to add, that the few instances referred to, however exceptionable, are of such a kind as to expose him to the charge rather of inadvertence, or momentary levity, than of any unfixedness of principle, much less any depravity of heart.

Of all the periodical works, those of Johnson, in point of strict and undeviating moral purity, unquestionably stand highest. Every page is invariably delicate. It is, therefore, the rare praise of this author, that the most vigilant preceptor may commit his voluminous works into the hands of even his female pupil, without caution, limitation, or reserve; secure that she cannot stumble on a pernicious sentiment, or rise from the perusal with the slightest taint of immorality. Even in his Dictionary, moral rectitude has not only been scrupulously maintained, but, as far as the nature of the work would admit, it has been assiduously inculcated. In the authorities which he has adduced, he has collected, with a discrimination which can never be enough admired, a countless multitude of the most noble sentences which English literature afforded; yet he has frequently contented himself with instances borrowed from inferior writers, when he found some passage, which at once served *his* purpose, and that of re-

ligion and morality, and also, as he declared himself, lest he should risk contaminating the mind of the student, by referring him to authors of more celebrity, but less purity. When we reflect how fatally the unsuspected title of *Dictionary* has been made the vehicle for polluting principle, we shall feel the value of this extreme conscientiousness of Johnson.

Still, however, while we ascribe to this excellent author all that is safe, and all that is just, it is less from Johnson than from Addison that we derive the interesting lessons of life and manners; that we learn to trace the exact delineations of character, and to catch the vivid hues and varied tints of nature. It is true, that every sentence of the more recent moralist is an aphorism, every paragraph a chain of maxims for guiding the understanding and guarding the heart. But when Johnson describes *characters*, he rather exhibits vice and virtue in the abstract, than real existing human beings: while Addison presents you with actual men and women; real life figures, compounded of the faults and the excellences, the wisdom and the weaknesses, the follies and the virtues of humanity. — By the Avarus, the Eubulus, the Misellus, the Sophron, the Zosima, and the Viator of Johnson, we are instructed in the soundest truths, but we are not struck by any vivid exemplification. We merely *hear* them, and we hear them with profit, but we do not *know* them. Whereas, with the members of the Spectator's club we are *acquainted.* Johnson's personages are elaborately carved figures

that fill the niches of the saloon; Addison's are the living company which animate it. Johnson's have more drapery; Addison's more countenance. Johnson's gentlemen and ladies, scholars and chambermaids, philosophers and coquets, all argue syllogistically, all converse in the same academic language; divide all their sentences into the same triple members, turn every phrase with the same measured solemnity, and round every period with the same polished smoothness. Addison's talk learnedly or lightly, think deeply, or prate flippantly, in exact accordance with their character, station, and habits of life.

What reader, when he meets with the description of Sir Roger de Coverly, or Will Wimble, or of the Tory fox-hunter in the Freeholder, does not frame in his own mind a lively image of each, to which ever after he naturally recurs, and on which his recollection, if we may so speak, rather than his imagination, fastens, as on an old intimate? The lapse of a century, indeed, has induced a considerable change in modes of expression and forms of behaviour. But, though manners are mutable, human nature is permanent. And it can no more be brought as a charge against the truth of Addison's characters that the manners are changed, than it can be produced against the portraits of Sir Peter Lely and Vandyck, that the fashions of dress are altered. The human character, like the human figure, is the same in all ages; it is only the exterior and the costume which vary. Grace of attitude, exquisite

proportion, and striking resemblance, do not diminish of their first charm, because ruffs, perukes, satin doublets, and slashed sleeves are passed away. Addison's characters may be likened to that expressive style of drawing, which gives the exact contour by a few careless strokes of the pencil. They are rendered amusing, by being in some slight degree caricatures; yet all is accurate resemblance, nothing is wanton aggravation. They have, in short, that indescribable grace which will always captivate the reader in proportion to the delicacy of his own perceptions.

Among the benefits which have resulted from the writings of Addison, the attention first drawn to Paradise Lost by his criticisms was not one of the least. His examination of that immortal work, the boast of our island, and of human nature, had the merit of subduing the violence of party-prejudice, and of raising its great author to an eminence in the minds of his countrymen, correspondent to that which he actually held, and will hold on the scale of genius, till time shall be no more.*

* Milton has dropt his mantle on a poet, inferior, indeed, to himself, in the loftiness of his conceptions, the variety of his learning, and the structure of his verse; but the felicity of whose genius is only surpassed by the elevation of his piety; whose devout effusions are more penetrating, and almost equally sublime; and who, in his moral and pathetic strokes, familiar allusions, and touching incidents, comes more home to the bosom than even his immortal master. When we observe of this fine spirit that he felt the beauties of nature with a lover's heart, beheld them with a poet's eye, and de-

If the critical writings of Addison do not possess the acuteness of Dryden, or the vigour of Johnson, they are familiar and elegant, and serve to prepare the mind for more elaborate investigation. If it be objected, that he deals too much in gratuitous praise and vague admiration, it may be answered, that the effect produced by poetry on the mind cannot always be philosophically accounted for; and Addison was too fair, and, in this instance, too cordial, a critic to withhold expressions of delight, merely because he could not analyse the causes which produced it. At any rate, it must be allowed, that he who wrote those exquisite *Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination* could not be superficial through penury. It is allowed that the criticisms of Johnson are, in general, much more systematic: they possess more depth as well as more discrimination; but they are less pleasing, because they are not equally good-natured. They are more tinctured with party-spirit, and breathe less generous and voluntary admiration. But no critic has been more success-

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lineated them with a painter's hand;—that the minute accuracy of his lesser figures, and the exquisite finishing of his rural groupes, delight the fancy, as much as the sublimity of his nobler images exalt the mind;—that in spite of faults and negligences, and a few instances of ungraceful asperity, he gratifies the judgment as much as he enchants the imagination;—that he directs the feelings to virtue, and the heart to heaven:—need we designate the sketch by affixing to it the name of Cowper?

ful in laying open the internal structure of the poet; though he now and then handles the knife so roughly as to disfigure what he means to dissect. His learning was evidently much deeper, as well as better digested, than that of Addison, and the energy of his understanding was almost unrivalled. He, therefore, discovers a rare ability in appreciating, with the soundest and most sagacious scrutiny, the poetry of reason and good sense; in the composition of which he also excels. But to the less bounded excursions of high imagination, to the bolder achievements of pure invention, he is less just, because less sensible. He appears little alive to that species of writing, whose felicities consist in ease and grace, to the floating forms of ideal beauty, to the sublimer flights of the lyric muse, or to the finer touches of dramatic excellence. He would consequently be cold in his approbation, not to say perverse in his discussion, of some of these species of beauty, of which, in fact, his feelings were less susceptible.

He had, however, that higher perfection, which has been too rarely associated with those faculties, the most discerning taste and the liveliest relish for the truest as well as the noblest species of the sublime and beautiful, — I mean that which belongs to moral excellence. Where this was obvious, it not only conquered his aversion, but attracted his warm affection. It was this which made him the ardent eulogist of Watts, in spite of his non-conformity, and even the advocate of Blackmore, whom it must have been natural for

him to despise as a bad poet, and to hate as a Whig. It is this best of tastes which he also most displays in that beautiful eulogium of Addison, to which in the present comparison, it would be injustice to both not to refer the reader.

His *Tour to the Hebrides* exhibits a delightful specimen of an intellectual traveller, who extracts beauty from barrenness, and builds up a solid mass of instruction with the most slender materials. He leaves to the writer of natural history, whose proper province it is, to run over the world in quest of mosses and grasses, of minerals and fossils. Nor does he swell his book with catalogues of pictures which have neither novelty nor relevancy; nor does he copy, from preceding authors, the ancient history of a country of which we only want to know the existing state; nor does he convert the grand scenes which display the wonders of the Creator's power into doubts of his existence, or disbelief of his government: but fulfilling the office of an inquisitive and moral traveller, he presents a lively and interesting view of men and things; of the country which he visited, and of the persons with whom he conversed. And though his inveterate Scottish prejudices now and then break out, his spleen seems rather to have been exercised against trees than men. Towards the latter, his seeming illiberality has in reality more of merriment than malice. In his heart he respected that brave and learned nation. When he is unfair, his unfairness is often mitigated by some stroke of humour, perhaps of good humour, which

effaces the impression of his severity. Whatever faults may be found in the Tour to the Hebrides, it is no small thing, at this period, to possess a book of travels entirely pure from the lightest touch of vanity or impurity, of levity or impiety.

His *Rasselas* is a work peculiarly adapted to the royal pupil; and though it paints human life in too dark shades, and dwells despondingly on the unattainableness of human happiness, these defects will afford excellent occasions for the sagacious preceptor to unfold through what pursuits life may be made happy by being made useful; by what superinduced strength the burdens of this mortal state may be cheerfully borne, and by what a glorious perspective its termination may be brightened.

The praise which has been given to Addison as an essayist can rarely be extended to many of his coadjutors. Talent, more or less, we every where meet with, and very ingenious sketches of character; but moral delicacy is so often, and sometimes so shamefully, violated, that (whatever may have been the practice) the Spectator ought to be accounted an unfit book for the indiscriminate perusal of youth.*

However the collection of periodical papers, entitled *The Freeholder*, may be passed over by common readers, it would be unpardonable not to direct to them the attention of a royal pupil. The object at which they aim, the strengthening of the

* Happily all Addison's papers have been selected by Tickell, in his edition of Addison's works.

Hanoverian cause against the combined efforts of the house of Stuart and the French court, makes them interesting; and they exhibit an exquisite specimen of political zeal, without political acrimony. They abound in strokes of wit; and the Tory Fox-hunter is, perhaps, next to the rural knight in the Spectator, one of the most entertaining descriptions of character in our language. Of these, as well as of his other essays, it may be said, that in them the follies, the affectations, and the absurdities of life are pourtrayed with the lightest touches of the most delicate pencil; that never was ridicule more nicely pointed, nor satire more playfully inoffensive.

In the *Guardian* there is hardly any thing that is seriously exceptionable; and this work is enriched with some essays that are not to be placed beneath even those of Addison. It will be obvious, that we allude to the papers ascribed to Bishop Berkeley. These essays bear the marks of a mind at once vigorous and correct, deep in reflection, and opulent in imagery. They are chiefly directed against the free-thinkers; a name by which the infidels of that age chose to call themselves; and never, perhaps, has that wretched character been more admirably illustrated than in the simile of the fly on St. Paul's cathedral.

Another difference between Addison and Johnson is, that the periodical writings of the former are those in which the powers of his mind appear to most advantage. Not so in the case of Johnson. Solidly valuable as the *Rambler* must be

accounted in the point of celebrity, it probably owes much more to its author, than it has conferred on him. A forbidding stateliness, a rigid and yet inflated style, an almost total absence of ease and cheerfulness, would too probably bring neglect on the great and various excellences of these volumes, if they had been the single work of their author. But his other writings, and, above all, that inexhaustible fund of pleasure and profit, the *Lives of the Poets*, will secure perpetuated attention to every work which bears the name of Johnson. On the ground of distinct attractiveness, the *Idler* is the most engaging of Johnson's periodical works; the manner being less severe, and the matter more amusing.

The *Adventurer*, perhaps on account of its interesting tales and affecting narratives, is, of all others of its class, the most strictly suitable to youth. It also contains much general knowledge, elegant criticism, and various kinds of pleasing information. In almost all these works, the Eastern Tales, Allegories, and Visions, are interesting in the narrative, elevated in the sentiment, pure in the descriptions, and sublime in the moral. They convey lessons peculiarly appropriated to the great, most of the fictitious personages who are made the vehicles of instruction being either princes or statesmen.

If we advert to religion, the praise of Addison in this infinitely important instance must not be omitted. Johnson never *loses sight* of religion, but on very few occasions does he particularly

dwell upon it. In one or two passages * only has he given vent to his religious feelings; and his sentiments are so soundly, indeed so sublimely excellent, that it is impossible not to regret the scantiness with which he has afforded them. But Addison seems to delight in the subject, and, what is remarkable, his devout feelings seem to have much transcended his theological accuracy. To the latter, exception might justly be taken in one or two instances †; to the former, never. If it were to be asked, where are the elevating, ennobling, felicitating effects of religion on the human mind as safely stated, and as happily expressed, as in any English author? perhaps a juster answer could scarcely be given than — *in the devotional papers of Addison.*

* Number VII. in the Rambler; paper on affliction in the Idler; and the noble passage in the account of Iona.

† See particularly that very exceptionable paper in the Spectator, No. 459. Also, another on Superstition and Enthusiasm.

CHAP. XXX.

BOOKS OF AMUSEMENT.

As the royal person will hereafter require books of amusement as well as instruction, it will be a task of no small delicacy to select such as may be perused, with as much profit, and as little injury, as is to be expected from works of mere entertainment. Perhaps there are few books which possess the power of delighting the fancy, without conveying any dangerous lesson to the heart, equally with Don Quixote.

It does not belong to our subject to animadvert on its leading excellence; that incomparable delicacy of satire, those unrivalled powers of ridicule, which had sufficient force to reclaim the corrupted taste, and sober the distempered imagination of a whole people. This, which on its first appearance was justly considered as its predominant merit, is now become less interesting; because, the evil which it assailed no longer existing, the medicine which cured the mad is grown less valuable to the sane; yet Don Quixote will be entitled to admiration on imperishable grounds.

Though Cervantes wrote between two and three hundred years ago, and for a people of a national turn of thinking dissimilar to ours; yet that *right good sense*, which is of all ages, and all

countries, and which pervades this work more almost than even its exquisite wit and humour; those masterly portraits of character; those sound maxims of conduct; those lively touches of nature; those admirably serious lessons, though given on ridiculous occasions; those penetrating strokes of feeling; those solemnly sententious phrases, tinctured with the characteristic absurdity of the speaker, without any injury to the truth of the sentiment; that mixture of the wise and the ludicrous, of action always pitiably extravagant, and of judgment often exemplarily sober. In all these excellences Don Quixote is without a parallel.

How admirable (to produce only one instance out of a thousand) is that touch of human nature, where the knight of La Mancha, having bestowed the most excessive and high-flown compliments on a gentleman whom he encountered when the delirium of chivalry raged most strongly in his imagination! — The gentleman, who is represented as a person of admirable sense, is led by the effect which these compliments produced on his own mind to acknowledge the weakness of the heart of man, in the foolish pleasure it derives from flattery. "So bewitching is praise," says he, "that even I have the weakness to be pleased with it, though, at the same time, I know the flatterer to be a madman!"

Wit, it has been said, is gay, but humour is grave. It is a striking illustration of this opinion, that the most serious and solemn nation in the

world has produced the work of the most genuine humour. Nor is it easy to express how admirably the pomp and stateliness of the Spanish language are suited to the genius of this work. It is not unfavourable to the true heroic, but much more especially is it adapted to the mock dignity of the sorrowful knight. It is accommodated to the elevation of the fantastic hero's tiptoe march, when he is sober, and still more to his stilts, when he is raving.

The two very ingenious French and English novelists, who followed Cervantes, though with unequal steps even as to talent, are still farther below their great master both in mental and moral delicacy. Though the scenes, descriptions, and expressions of Le Sage, are far less culpable, in point of decency, than those of his English competitor, yet both concur in the same inexpiable fault, each labouring to excite an interest for a vicious character, each making the hero of his tale an unprincipled profligate.

If novels are read at all, in early youth, a practice which we should think "more honoured in the breach than the observance," we should be tempted to give the preference to those works of pure and genuine fancy, which exercise and fill the imagination, in preference to those which, by exhibiting passion and intrigue in bewitching colours, lay hold too intensely on the feelings. We should even venture to pronounce those stories to be most safe, which, by least assimilating with our own habits and manners, are

less likely to infect and soften the heart, by those amatory pictures, descriptions, and situations, which too much abound, even in some of the chastest compositions of this nature. The young female is pleasantly interested for the fate of Oriental queens, for Zobeide, or the heroine of Almoran and Hamet; but she does not put herself in their *place;* she is not *absorbed* in their pains or their pleasures; she does not identify her feelings with *theirs*, as she too probably does in the case of Sophia Western and the Princess of Cleves. Books of the former description innocently invigorate the fancy, those of the latter convey a contagious sickliness to the mind. The one raise harmless wonder or inoffensive merriment; the other awaken ideas, at best unprofitable. From the flights of the one, we are willing to descend to the rationality of common life; from the seductions of the other, we are disgusted at returning to its insipidity.

There is always some useful instruction in those great original works of invention, whether poetry or romance, which transmit a faithful living picture of the *manners* of the age and country in which the scene is laid. It is this which, independently of its other merits, diffuses that inexpressible charm over the Odyssey; a species of enchantment which is not afforded by any other poem in the world. This, in a less degree, is also one of the striking merits of Don Quixote. And this, after having soared so high, if we may descend so low, is the principal recommendation

of the Arabian Tales. These tales also, though faulty in some respects, possess another merit which we should be glad to see transferred to some of the novels of a country nearer home. We learn from these Arabian stories, and indeed from most of the works of imagination of the Mahometan authors, what was the specific religion of the people about whom they write; how much they made religion enter into the ordinary concerns of life; and how observant persons professing religion were of its peculiarities and its worship.

It is but justice to observe, how far more deeply mischievous the French novel writers are than those of our own country; they not only seduce the heart through the senses, and corrupt it through the medium of the imagination, but fatally strike at the very root and being of all virtue, by annihilating all belief in that religion, which is its only vital source and seminal principle.

SHAKESPEARE.

But lessons of a nobler kind may be extracted from some works which promise nothing better than mere entertainment, and which will not, to ordinary readers, appear susceptible of any higher purpose. In the hands of a judicious preceptor, many of Shakespeare's tragedies, especially of his historical pieces, and still more such as are rendered peculiarly interesting by local circumstances, by British manners, and by the introduction of royal characters who once filled the English

throne, will furnish themes on which to ground much appropriate and instructive conversation.

Those mixed characters especially, which he has drawn with such a happy intuition into the human mind, in which some of the worst actions are committed by persons not destitute of good dispositions and amiable qualities, but overwhelmed by the storm of unresisted passion, sinking under strong temptation, or yielding to powerful flattery, are far more instructive in the perusal than the "faultless monsters," or the heroes of unmixed perfection of less skilful dramatists. The agitations, for instance, of the *timorous Thane*, a man not destitute of generous sentiments; but of a high and aspiring mind, stimulated by vain credulity, tempting opportunity, and an ambitious wife. Goaded by the woman he loved to the crime he hated, — grasping at the crown, but abhorring the sin which was to procure it; — the agonies of guilt combating with the sense of honour, — agonies not merely excited by the vulgar dread of detection and of punishment which would have engrossed an ordinary mind, but sharpened by unappeasable remorse; which remorse, however, proves no hinderance to the commission of fresh crimes, — crimes which succeed each other as numerously, and as rapidly, as the visionary progeny of Banquo. At first,

> What he would highly, he would holily:

but a familiarity with horrors soon cured this delicacy; and in his subsequent and multiplied

murders, necessity became apology. The whole presents an awful lesson on the terrible consequences of listening to the first slight suggestion of sin, and strikingly exemplifies that from harbouring criminal thoughts, to the forming black designs, and perpetrating the most atrocious deeds, the mind is led by a natural progress, and an unresisted rapidity.

The conflicting passions of the capricious Lear tender and affectionate in the extreme, but whose irregular affections were neither controlled by nature, reason, or justice; a character weak and vehement, fond and cruel; whose kindness was determined by no principle; whose mind governed by no fixed sense of right, but vibrating with the accident of the moment, and the caprice of the predominant humour; sacrificing the virtuous child, whose sincerity should have secured his affection, to the preposterous flattery of her unnatural sisters. These highly-wrought scenes do not merely excite in the reader a barren sympathy for the pangs of self-reproach, of destitute age, and suffering royalty, but inculcate a salutary abhorrence of adulation and falsehood; a useful caution against partial and unjust judgment; a sound admonition against paternal injustice and filial ingratitude.

The beautiful and touching reflections of Henry IV. in those last soul-searching moments, when the possession of a crown became nothing, and the unjust ambition by which he had obtained it, every thing. Yet, exhibiting a prince still so

far retaining to the last the cautious policy of his character, as to mix his concern for the state, and his affection for his son, with the natural dissimulation of his own temper; and blending the finest sentiments on the uncertainty of human applause and earthly prosperity, with a watchful attention to confine the knowledge of the unfair means by which he had obtained the crown to the heir who was to possess it. The wily politician predominating to the last moment, and manifesting rather regret than repentance: — disclosing that the assumed sanctity with which he had been preparing for a crusade was only a project to check those enquiries into his title to the crown to which peace and rest might lead; and exhorting the Prince, with a foreseeing subtilty which little became a dying monarch, to keep up quarrels with foreign powers, in order to wear out the memory of domestic usurpation; — all this presents a striking exhibition of a superior mind, so long habituated to the devious paths of worldly wisdom, and crooked policy, as to be unable to desert them, even in the pangs of dissolution.

The pathetic soliloquies of the repentant Wolsey, fallen from the pinnacle of wealth and power to a salutary degradation! A disgrace, which restored him to reason, and raised him to religion, which destroyed his fortune, but rescued his soul. His counsels to the rising statesman Cromwell, on the perils of ambition, and the precariousness of royal favour; the vanity of all attachment which has not religion for its basis; the weakness of all

fidelity which has not the fear of God for its principle; and the perilous end of that favour of the courtier, which is enjoyed at the dear price of his "integrity to Heaven!"

The pernicious power of flattery on a female mind so skilfully exemplified in that memorable scene in which the bloody Richard conquers the aversion of the Princess Anne to the murderer of her husband, and of all his royal race! The deplorable error of the feeble-minded Princess, in so far forgetting his crimes in his compliments, as to consent to the monstrous union with the murderer! Can there be a more striking exemplification of a position we have ventured so frequently to establish, of the dangers to which vanity is liable, and of the miseries to which flattery leads?

The reflections of Henry VI. and of Richard II. on the cares and duties, the unsatisfactoriness and disappointment attending great situations, the vanity of human grandeur while enjoyed, and the uncertain tenure by which it is held! — These fine soliloquies preach powerfully to the hearts of all in high stations, but most powerfully to those in the highest.

The terribly instructive death-bed of Cardinal Beaufort, whose silence, like the veil in the celebrated picture of the sacrifice of Iphigenia by Timanthes, thrown over the father's face, penetrates the soul more by what it conceals than could have been effected by any thing that its removal might have discovered.

These, and a thousand other instances too

various to be enumerated, too obvious to require specifying, and too beautiful to stand in need of comment, may, when properly selected, and judiciously animadverted on, not only delight the imagination, and gratify the feelings, but carry instruction to the heart.

The royal pupil may discern in Shakespeare an originality which has no parallel. He exhibits humour the most genuine, and, what is far more extraordinary, propriety of senitiment, and delicacies of conduct, where, from his low opportunities, failure had been pardonable. A fidelity to character so minute, that it seem rather the accuracy of individual history, marking the incidental deviations, and delineating the casual humours of actual life, than the invention of the poet. Shakespeare has seized every turn and flexure of the ever-varying mind of man in all its fluctuating forms; touched it in all its changeful shades, and marked in all its nicer gradations, as well as its more abrupt varieties. He exhibits the whole internal structure of man; uniting the correctness of anatomy with the exactness of delineation, the graces of proportion, and often the highest beauty of colouring.

But with these excellences, the works of this most unequal of all poets contain so much that is vulgar, so much that is absurd, and so much that is impure; so much indecent levity, false wit, and gross description, that he should only be read in parcels, and with the nicest selection. His more exceptionable pieces should not be read at all;

and even of the best, much may be omitted. But the qualified perusal here suggested may, on account of his wonderful acquaintance with the human heart, be attended with peculiar advantages to readers of the class in question, one of whose chief studies should be that of mankind, and who, from the circumstance of station and sex, have few direct and safe means of acquiring a knowledge of the world, and an acquaintance with the various characters which compose it.

To the three celebrated Greek tragedians, we have already adverted, as uniting, with the loftiest powers of genius, a general prevalence of virtuous and often even of pious sentiments. The scenes with which they abound, of meritorious, of suffering, of imprudent, of criminal, of rash, and of penitent princes; of royalty under every vicissitude of passion, of character, and circumstance, will furnish an interesting and not unprofitable entertainment. And Mr. Potter has put the English reader in possession of these ancient bards, of Eschylus especially, in a manner highly honourable to his own taste and learning.

Most of the tragedies of Racine are admirably written, and are unexceptionable in almost all respects. They possess, though conveyed in the poor vehicle of French versification *, all the

* It is a curious circumstance in the history of French dramatic poetry, that the measure used by their best poets in their sublimest tragedies is the anapæstic, which, in our language, is not only the lightest and most undignified of all the poetic measures, but is still more degraded by being

dramatic requisites, and to their author we can safely ascribe one merit, superior even to that of the critical exactness with which he has regulated the unities of his plays by Aristotle's clock; we mean his constant care not to offend against modesty or religion. His Athalie exhibits, at once, a *chef-d'œuvre* of the dramatic art, a proof of what exquisite poetic beauties the Bible histories are susceptible; a salutary warning to princes on the miseries attendant upon treachery, impiety, and ambition; and a lively instance of not only the private value, but the great political importance of eminently able and pious ministers of religion.

If the Italian language should form a part of the royal education, we might name Metastasio as quite inoffensive in a moral view, though necessarily mixing something of the flimsy texture of the opera with the severer graces of Melpomene. His muse possesses an equable and steady pinion: if she seldom soars into sublimity, she never sinks to meanness; she is rather elegant and pleasing, than vigorous or lofty. His sacred dramas are particularly excellent, and are scarcely less interesting to the reader of taste than of piety. They are also exempt from a certain monotony, which

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chiefly applied to burlesque subjects. It is amusing to an English ear to hear the Brutus of Racine, the Cid of Corneille, and the Orosmane and Orestes of Voltaire, declaim, philosophise, sigh, and rave in the precise measure of

"A cobler there was, and he liv'd in a stall."

makes his other pieces too much to resemble each other.

It is with no small regret that, persuaded as we are that England is the rich native soil of dramatic genius, we are driven to the painful necessity of recommending exotics in preference to the indigenous productions of our own fruitful clime. The truth is, that though we possess in our language admirable single pieces, yet our tragic poets have afforded scarce any instances, except Milton, in his exquisite Comus, and Sampson Agonistes; and Mason, in his chaste and classic dramas; in which we can conscientiously recommend their *entire unweeded* volumes, as never deviating from that correctness and purity which should be the inseparable attendant on the tragic muse.*

We shall, indeed, find not only that virtuous scenes, and even pious sentiments, are scattered throughout most of our popular tragedies, but that the general moral also is frequently striking and impressive. Its *end*, however, is often defeated by the *means* employed to accomplish it. In how many, for instance, of the favourite tragedies of Rowe and Otway, which are most frequently acted, do we find passages and even whole scenes of a directly contrary tendency; passages calculated to awaken those very passions which it was the professed object of the author to counteract?

* Thomson's tragedies furnish the best exception to this remark of any with which the author is acquainted.

> First raising a combustion of desire,
> With some cold moral they would quench the fire.

When we contrast the purity, and, I had almost said, the piety of the works of the tragic poets of pagan Greece, and even the more select ones of popish France, with some of the pieces of the most shining bards of Protestant Britain, do they not all appear to have been in an inverse ratio with the advantages which their authors enjoyed?

It may be objected, that, in speaking of poetic composition, we have dwelt so long, and almost so exclusively, on the drama. It would, indeed, have been far more pleasant to range at large through the whole flowery fields of the muses, where we could have gathered much that is sweet, and much that is salutary. But we must not indulge in excursions which are merely pleasurable. We have on all occasions made it a point not to recommend books because they are pleasant, or even good, but because they are appropriate. And as it is notorious

> —— that gorgeous Tragedy
> With *sceptred* pall comes sweeping by,
> Presenting Thebes' or Pelops' line; —

that she prefers the splendid scenes of royal courts to the retired walks of private life; that she delights to exemplify virtue, to designate vice, or dignify calamity, by choosing her personages among kings and princes, we therefore thought it might not be altogether unuseful, in touching on this topic, to distinguish between such authors as

are safe, and such as are dangerous; by mentioning those of the one class with deserved commendation, and by generally passing over the names of the others in silence.

CHAP. XXXI.

BOOKS OF INSTRUCTION, ETC. LORD BACON, ETC.

In the "prophet of unborn science," who brought into use a logic almost entirely new, and who rejected the study of words for that of things, the royal pupil may see the way, rarely used before his time, of arguing by induction; a logic grounded upon observation, fact, and experiment. To estimate the true value of Lord Bacon, we should recollect what was the state of learning when he appeared; we should remember with what a mighty hand he overthrew the despotism of that absurd system which had kept true knowledge in shackles, arrested the progress of sound philosophy, and blighted the growth of the human intellect.

His first aim was to clear the ground, by rooting out the preconceived errors, and obstinate prejudices, which long prescription had established; and then to substitute what was useful, in place of that idle and fruitless speculation which had so long prevailed. He was almost the first rational investigator of the laws of nature, who made genuine truth and sound knowledge, and not a barren curiosity, and an unprofitable ingenuity, the object of his pursuit. His instances are all said to be collected with as much judgment as they are recorded with simplicity. He

teaches the important art of viewing a question on all sides, and of eliciting truth from the result; and he always makes reasoning and experiment go hand in hand, mutually illustrating each other.

One principal use of being somewhat acquainted with this great author is, to learn that admirable method and order which he uniformly observes. So excellent is the disposition he makes, that the reader is not lost, even in that mighty mass of matter in which he arranges the arts of history, poetry, and philosophy, under their three great corresponding faculties, of memory, imagination, and understanding. This perspicuous clearness of distribution; this breaking up his subject into parts, without losing sight of that whole to which each portion preserves its exact subordination, enables the reader to follow him, without perplexity, in the wide stretch and compass of his intellectual researches.

With the same admirable method he has also made a distribution of the several branches of history. He separates it into three divisions, — chronicles or annals, lives, and relations; assigning, in his luminous way, to each its respective properties. Lives of individuals, he is of opinion, exhibit more faithful and lively narratives of things; and he pronounces them capable of being more safely and advantageously transferred into example than general history. He assigns, also, a great degree of usefulness to special relations of actions, such as Catiline's conspiracy, and the expedition of Cyrus; conceiving them to be more pleasant by

presenting a subject more manageable, because more limited. And as a more exact knowledge and full information may be obtained of these individual relations, the author, he observes, is not driven, like the writer of general history, to fill up chasms and blank spaces out of his own imagination.*

* There is one instance in which even this great author has poorly executed his own ideas. After so ably laying down the outline of history, he has shown little skill, in an individual instance, in filling it up. Few writers have more remarkably failed, than Lord Bacon in his history of Henry VII. It is defective in almost all the ingredients of historic composition; neither possessing majesty nor dignity on the one hand, nor ease and perspicuity on the other. There is a constant aim at wit and pleasantry, with a constant failure in both. The choice of matter is injudicious: great circumstances are often slightly touched, while he enlarges upon trifles. The history is feeble narrative; the style is affected declamation; loaded, as if in defiance of Quintilian's precept, with those double epithets, which, as that noblest of critics observes, when each does not furnish a fresh idea, is as if every common soldier in an army should carry a footman, increasing the incumbrance without adding to the strength. The history of Henry VII. wants perspicuity, simplicity, and almost every grace required of the historic muse. And what is more strange, we neither discover in this work the deep politician, the man of business, the man of genius, or the man of the world. It abounds with those colloquial familiarities, we had almost said vulgarisms, with which the works of that reign are generally infected, but which we do not expect in this great author. Budgell has published in the Guardian a collection of numberless passages from this history, exemplifying almost every kind of literary defect; not with an invidious design to injure so great a name, but lest the authority of that name should sanction bad writing. The present criticism is offered, lest it should sanction bad taste.

Politics he arranges with the same methodical order, dividing them into three several parts, — the preservation of a state, its prosperity, and its enlargement. Of the two former branches, he allows that preceding authors had already treated, but intimates that he himself was the first who had discussed the latter. As political economy will hereafter form an important branch of study for the royal pupil, we are happily not wanting in very able modern authors, who, living in our time, are likely to be more extensively useful, from their intimate acquaintance with existing circumstances, and with the revolutions which have led to them.

Nothing seems to have been too great, or too small, for the universal mind of Bacon; nothing too high for his strong and soaring wing; nothing too vast for his extensive grasp; nothing too deep for his profound spirit of investigation; nothing too minute for his microscopic discernment. Whoever dives into the depths of learning, or examines the intricacies of politics, or explores the arcana of nature, or looks into the mysteries of art, or the doctrines of religion, or the scheme of morals, or the laws of jurisprudence, or the decorums of courts, or the duties of public conduct, or the habits of domestic life; whoever wanders among the thorns of metaphysics, or gathers the flowers of rhetoric, or plucks the fruits of philosophy, will find that this noble author has been his precursor; and that he himself can scarcely deviate into any path which Bacon has not previously explored.

Nor did the hand which so ably treats on the

formation of states disdain to arrange the plants of the field, or the flowers of the parterre; nor was the statesman, who discoursed so largely and so eloquently on the methods of improving kingdoms, or the philosopher, who descanted on the means of augmenting science, above teaching the pleasing art to select the sheltered spot for the tender exotic, to give minute instructions for polishing "the dry smooth-shaven green," for raising a strawberry, or cultivating a rose.

His *Moral Essays* are fraught with familiar wisdom, and practical virtue. With this intellectual and moral treasure the royal pupil cannot be too intimately conversant. His other writings are too voluminous, as well as too various and too scientific, to be read at large; and it is become the less necessary, the works of Bacon having been the grand seed-plot out of which all the modern gardens of philosophy, science, and letters, have been either sown or planted.

It is with deep regret we add, that after admiring in the works of this wonderful man to what a pitch the human mind can soar, we may see, from a few unhappy instances in his conduct, to what debasement it can stoop. While his writings store the mind with wisdom and the heart with virtue, we may, from his practice, take a melancholy lesson on the imperfection of human excellence, by the mortifying consideration of his ingratitude as a friend, his adulation as a courtier, and his venality as a chancellor.

Of the profound and various works of Locke,

the most accurate thinker, and the justest reasoner, which this or perhaps any other country has produced, we would particularly recommend the short but very valuable treatise on the *Conduct of the Understanding*. It contains a familiar and popular illustration of some important discoveries in his most distinguished work, the Essay on the Human Understanding, particularly that great and universal law of nature, "the support of so many mental powers (that of memory under all its modifications), and which produces equally remarkable effects in the intellectual, as that of gravitation does in the material world, *the association of ideas*." — A work of which even the sceptical rhapsodist, Lord Shaftesbury, who himself possessed much rhetoric and little logic, pronounced that "it may qualify men as well for business and the world as for the sciences and the university."

There are few books with which a royal person ought to be more thoroughly acquainted, than with the famous work of Grotius on the *Rights of War and Peace*. In this work the great principles of justice are applied to the highest political purposes; and the soundest reason is employed in the cause of the purest humanity. This valuable treatise owed its birth to the circumstance of the author, a statesman and ambassador, having, as he himself observes, personally witnessed, in all parts of the Christian world, "such an unbridled licentiousness with regard to war, as the most barbarous nations might blush at." — "They fly to arms," says he, "on frivolous pretences; and when once they have

them in their hands, they trample on all laws, human and divine, as if from the time of their assumption of arms they were authorised so to do."

In the course of the work he enquires, with a very vigorous penetration, into the origin of the rights of war, its different kinds, and the extent of the power of the sovereign. He clearly explains the nature and extent of those rights, the violation of which authorises the taking up arms. And, finally, after having ably descanted on all that relates to war in its beginning, and its progress, he as ably enlarges on the nature of those negotiations and treaties of peace which terminate it.*

With an intrepidity worthy of his genius, he was not afraid of dedicating a book, containing such bold and honest doctrines to a king of France. This admirable treatise was found in the tent of the great Gustavus after his death. It had been one of the principal objects of his study. The Swedish monarch knew how to choose his books and his ministers. He studied Grotius, and he employed Oxenstiern.

* The censure frequently expressed in these volumes, against princes who inconsiderately engage in war, can never apply to that in which we are involved. A war, which, on the part of the enemy, has levelled the just fences which separated nations, and destroyed the good faith which united them. A war, which, on our part, was entered upon, not for conquest but existence; not from ambition but necessity; not for revenge but justice; not to plunder other nations but to preserve our own. And not, exclusively, even to save ourselves, but for the restoration of desolated nations, and the final safety and repose of the whole civilised world.

If the royal person would peruse a work, which, to the rhetoric of ancient Greece, and the patriot spirit of ancient Rome, unites the warmth of contemporary interest and the dearness of domestic feeling; in which, to the vigour of a rapid and indignant eloquence, is superadded the widest extent of general knowledge, and the deepest political sagacity; — a work

> Where old experience doth attain
> To something like prophetic strain: —

a work which first unlocked the hidden springs of revolutionary principles; dived into the complicated and almost unfathomable depths of political, literary, and moral mischief; penetrated the dens and labyrinths, where anarchy, who long had been mysteriously brooding, at length hatched her baleful progeny; laid bare to view the dark recesses, where sacrilege, murder, treason, regicide, and atheism, were engendered. If she would hear the warning voice which first sounded the alarm in the ears of Britain, and which, by rousing to a sense of danger, kindled the spirit to repel it, which in Englishmen is always but one and the same act, she should peruse *Mr. Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution.*

It was the peculiar felicity of this great, but often misguided man, to light at last upon a subject, not only singularly congenial to the turn of his genius, but of his temper also. The accomplished scholar, the wit of vivid imagination, the

powerful orator rich in imagery, and abounding in classic allusion, had been previously displayed to equal advantage in his other works, but with considerable abatements, from prejudices which sometimes blinded his judgment, from a vehemence which often clouded his brightness. He had never wanted genius; — it would be hard to say he had ever wanted integrity; — but he had often wanted that consistency which is so necessary to make the parts of a great character cohere to each other. A patriot, yet not unfrequently seeming to act against the interests of his country; — a senator, never heard without admiration, but sometimes without effect; — a statesman, often embarrassing his adversaries, without always serving his friends, or advancing his cause. But in this concentration of his powers, this union of his faculties and feelings, *the Reflections on the French Revolution*, his impetuosity found objects which rendered its exercise not only pardonable but laudable. That violence, which had sometimes exhausted itself, unworthily in party, or unkindly on individuals, now found full scope for its exercise, in the unrestrained atrocities of a nation, hostile not only to Britain but to human nature itself. A nation not offending from the ordinary impulse of the passions, which might have been repelled by the ordinary means of resistance, but, "committing the oldest crimes the newest kind of way," and uniting the bloody inventions of the most selfish ambition, and the headlong appetites of the most

unbridled vices, with all the exquisite contrivances of gratuitous wickedness. And happily for his fame, all the successive actors in the revolutionary drama took care to sin up to any intemperance of language which even Mr. Burke could supply.

CHAP. XXXII.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. — THE OLD TESTAMENT.

IN speaking of the nature and evidences of revealed religion, it was impossihle to avoid anticipating the subject of this chapter, as it is from the Holy Scriptures alone that the nature of our divine religion can be adequately ascertained; and as it is only in that sacred volume that we can discover those striking congruities between Christianity, and all the moral exigencies of man, which form so irresistible an evidence of its coming from that God, "who is above all, and through all, and in us all."

There are, however, some additional points of view in which the Holy Scripture ought to be considered. It is doubtless most deeply interesting, as it contains in it that Revelation from heaven which was "to give light to them that sat in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace." But while we joyfully follow this collected radiance, we may humbly endeavour to examine the apparatus itself by which those beams of heaven are thrown on our path. Let us, then, consider the divine volume somewhat more in detail, endeavouring, at the same time, not to overlook those features which it presents to the critic or philologist. We do not mean to

him who, while he reads, affects to forget, that he has in his hands the *book of God*, and therefore indulges his perverse or profligate fancy, as if he were perusing the poems of Homer or of Hafez. But we mean the Christian critic, and the Christian philologist; characters, it is true, not very common, yet through the mercy of God so exemplified in a few noble instances even in our own days, as to convince us, that in the formation of these volumes of eternal life, no faculty, no taste, no impressible point in the mind of man, has been left unprovided for. They show us, too, what an extensive field the Sacred Scriptures furnish for those classical labours, of which they possibly were deemed scarcely susceptible before the admirable Lowth gave his invaluable Prelections.

The first circumstance which presents itself, is the variety of composition which is crowded into these narrow limits. Historical records extending through thousands of years; — poetry of almost every species; — biographic memoirs of that very kind which the modern world agrees to deem most interesting; — epistolary correspondence which, even for excellence of manner, might challenge a comparison with any composition of that nature in the world; — and, lastly, that singular kind of writing, peculiar to this sacred book, in which the veil that hides futurity from man is penetrated, remote occurrences so anticipated, as to imply a demonstration that God alone could have communicated such knowledge to man.

In the historic parts we cannot but be struck with a certain peculiar consciousness of accurate knowledge, evincing itself by two grand characteristics, precision and simplicity. They are not the annals of a nation which are before us, so much as the records of a family. Truth is obviously held in supreme value, since even where it is discreditable, there is not the slightest attempt to disguise it. The affections are cordially at work; but they are more filial than patriotic, and more devout than filial. To these writers the God of their fathers is of more importance than their fathers themselves. They therefore preserve, with the greatest care, those transactions of their ancestors, which were connected with the most signal interferences of heaven; and no circumstance is omitted, by which additional motives might be afforded for that habitual reverence, supreme love, and unshaken confidence towards the Eternal Father, which constituted the pure and sublime religion of this singly enlightened people. What Moses magnificently expresses in the exordium of that noble Ode, the 90th psalm, contains the central principle which all their history was intended to impress: — "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place from one generation to another; before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst made the earth and the world; even from everlasting to everlasting, THOU ART GOD."

Other nations have doubtless made their history subservient to their mythology; or rather, being

ignorant of the facts, they have at once gratified their national vanity, and indulged their moral depravity, in imagining offensive and monstrous chimeras. But do these humiliating infatuations of human kind, universal as they have been, bear any shadow of analogy to the divinely philosophic grandeur of Hebrew piety? All other mythologic histories degrade our nature. This alone restores its primeval dignity. The pious Jews were doubtless the greatest zealots on earth. But for whom? "For no griesly terror," nor "execrable shape," like all other Orientalists, ancient and modern;—no brute, like the Egyptians, nor deified monster, worse than brute, like the Greeks and Romans. But it was for HIM, whom philosophers in all ages have in vain laboured to discover; of whose character, nevertheless, they have occasionally caught some faint idea from those very Jews, whom they have despised, and who, in the description even of the heathen Tacitus, awes our minds, and claims the natural homage of our hearts. "The Egyptians," says that unbribed evidence, in the midst even of an odious representation of the Jewish nation, "venerate various animals, as well as likenesses of monsters. The Jews acknowledge, and that with the *mind* only, a single Deity. They account those to be profane, who form images of God of perishable materials, in the likeness of men. There is *the one supreme eternal God, unchangeable, immortal.* They therefore suffer no statues in their cities, and still less in their temples. They have never shown this mark of flattery

to their kings. They have never done this honour to the Cæsars." *

What then was zeal for such worship as this, but the purest reason, and the highest magnanimity? And how wise as well as heroic do they appear who made no account of life in such a cause! "O King," say they, "we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us out of thine hand. But if not, be it known unto thee, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Of such a religion as this, what can be more interesting than the simple, the affectionate history? it is not men whom it celebrates; it is "Him who only hath immortality, who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto." And how does it represent him? That single expression of the patriarch Abraham will fully inform us: "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? That be far from thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right." A sentiment short and simple as it is, which carries more light to the mind, and more consolation to the heart, than all the volumes of all the philosophers.

But what was the *moral* efficacy of this religion? Let the youthful Joseph tell us. Let him, at the moment of his victory over all that has most effectually subdued human nature, discover to us where his strength lay:—"How," says he, "shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

* Tacitus Hist. Lib. v. 5.

Of the lesser excellences of these historic records, little on the present occasion can, and, happily, little needs be said. If the matter is unmixed truth, the manner is unmixed nature. Were the researches of Sir William Jones, and those who have followed him in the same track, valuable on no other account, they would be inestimable in this respect, that through what they have discovered and translated, we are enabled to compare other eastern compositions with the sacred books of the Hebrews: the result of which comparison, supposing only taste and judgment to decide, must ever be this, that, in many instances, nothing can recede farther from the simplicity of truth and nature than the one, nor more constantly exhibit both than the other. This assertion may be applied with peculiar justness to the poetic parts of the Old Testament. The character of the eastern poetry, in general, would seem to be that of floridness and exuberance, with little of the true sublime, and a constant endeavour to outdo rather than to imitate nature. The Jewish poetry seems to have been cast in the most perfect mould. The expressions are strictly subordinate to the sense; and while nothing is more energetic, nothing is more simple and natural. If the language be strong, it is the strength of sentiment allied with the strength of genius which alone produces it. For this striking dissimilarity the difference of subject will account. There is one God. — *This* is perfect simplicity. He is omniscient, omnipotent, infinite, and eternal. — *This* is

sublimity beyond which nothing can rise. What evinces this to be the real source of excellence in Hebrew poetry is, that no instances of the sublime, in the whole compass of human composition, will bear a comparison with what the Hebrew poets say of the Almighty. For example: what in all the poetry, even of Homer, is to be compared with this passage of David? — "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? if I climb up into heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

It is a peculiarity of Hebrew poetry, that it alone, of all the poetry we know of in the world, retains its poetic structure in the most literal translation; nay, indeed, the more literal the translation, the less the poetry is injured. The reason is, that the sacred poetry of the Hebrews does not appear to depend on cadence or rhythm, or any thing merely verbal, which literal translation into another language necessarily destroys; but on a method of giving to each distinct idea a two-fold expression: so that when the poetry of the Old Testament is perfect, and not injured by erroneous translation, it exhibits a series of couplets, in which the second member of each couplet repeats the same, or very nearly the same sense, in a varied manner; — as in the beginning of the 95th psalm: —

" O come let us sing unto the Lord,
Let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation;
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
And show ourselves glad in him with psalms:
For the Lord is a great God,
And a great King above all gods:
In his hand are the deep places of the earth,
And the strength of the hills is his also."

The motive for adopting such a structure we easily conceive to have been, that the composition might be adapted to responsive singing. But, can we avoid acknowledging a much deeper purpose of Infinite Wisdom, that that poetry which was to be translated into all languages should be of such a kind as literal translation could not decompose?

On the subject of Hebrew poetry, however, it is only necessary to refer the reader to Bishop Lowth's work already mentioned, and to that shorter, but most luminous discourse on this subject, prefixed to the same excellent author's translation of Isaiah.

Moral philosophy, in its truest and noblest sense, is to be found in every part of the Scriptures. Revealed religion, being, in fact, that " day-spring from on high," of whose happy effects the pagan philosophers had no knowledge, and the want of which they were always endeavouring to supply by artificial but most delusive contrivances. But the portion of the sacred volume which is most distinctly appropriated to this subject are the books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs. In the former of these, amid some difficult passages, obscured to us by our ignorance of ancient nations and manners, there are some of the deepest reflections

on the vanity of all things earthly, and on the indispensable necessity of sincere religion in order to our ease and happiness, that ever came from the pen of man. It asserts the immortality of the soul, of which some have supposed the Jews ignorant, in terms the most unequivocal. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and *the spirit shall return to God who gave it.*" And it ends with a corollary to which every human heart ought to respond, because all just reflection leads to it: — "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God and keep his commandments, for this is *the whole of man.* — For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

The Proverbs are an invaluable summary of every species of practical wisdom. The first nine chapters being a discourse on true wisdom, that is, sincere religion, as a principle, and the remainder a sort of magazine of all its varied parts, civil, social, domestic, and personal, in this world; together with clear and beautiful intimations of happiness in a life to come. As for example: — "The path of the just is as a shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Here, one of the most delightful objects in nature, the advancing dawn of the morning, is adduced as an emblem of that growing comfort and cheerfulness which inseparably attend a life of piety. What, then, by inevitable analogy, is that perfect day in which it is made to terminate, but the eternal happiness of heaven? Both these books, with the

greater part of the Psalms, have this suitable peculiarity to the present occasion, that they issued from a royal pen. They contain a wisdom, truly, which belongs to all; but they also have much in them which peculiarly concerns those who, by providential destination, are shepherds of the people. The 101st Psalm, in particular, may be considered as a kind of abridged manual for princes, especially in the choice of their company.

CHAP. XXXIII.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. — THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE biographic part of the New Testament is above all human estimation, because it contains the portraiture of "him in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily." If it were, therefore, our hard lot to say what individual part of the Scriptures we should wish to rescue from an otherwise irreparable destruction, ought it not to be that part which describes to us the conduct and preserves to us the instructions of *God manifest in the flesh?* Worldly Christians have affected sometimes to prefer the Gospels to the rest of the New Testament, on the intimated ground that our Saviour was a less severe preceptor, and more of a mere moralist, than his inspired followers, whose writings make up the sequel of the New Testament. But never surely was there a grosser delusion. If the object be to probe the heart of man to the centre; to place before him the terrors of that God, who to the wicked "is a consuming fire;" to convince him of that radical change which must take place in his whole nature; of that total conquest which he must gain over the world and himself, before he can be a true subject of the Messiah's spiritual kingdom; and of the desperate disappointment which must finally await all who rest in the mere profession, or even the plausible outside of Chris-

tianity; it is from our Lord's discourses that we shall find the most resistless means of accomplishing each of these awfully important purposes.

To the willing disciple our Saviour is indeed the gentlest of instructors; to the contrite penitent he is the most cheering of comforters; to weakness he is most encouraging; to infirmity, unspeakably indulgent; to grief or distress of whatever sort, he is a pattern of tenderness. But in all he says or does, he has one invariable object in view; to which all the rest is but subservient. He lived and taught, he died and rose again, for this one end, that he might "redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of *good works.*" His uniform declarations, therefore, are — "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. — Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." — "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee." — "Except a man deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me, he cannot be my disciple."

To corrupt human nature these lessons can never be made engaging. Their object is to conquer, and finally to eradicate that corruption. To indulge it, therefore, in any instance, is wholly to reject them; since it is not with particular vices that Christ contends, nor will he be satisfied with particular virtues. But he calls us, indispensably, to a *state of mind* which contains, as in a root or principle, all possible virtue, and which avoids, with equally sincere detestation, every species of evil. But to human nature itself,

as distinct from its depravity, to native taste, sound discriminating sense, just and delicate feeling, comprehensive judgment, profound humility, and genuine magnanimity of mind, no teacher upon this earth ever so adapted himself. In his inexhaustible imagery, his appropriate use of all the common occurrences of life, his embodying the deepest wisdom in the plainest allegories, and making familiar occurrences the vehicle of most momentous instruction, in the dignified ease with which he utters the profoundest truths, the majestic severity which he manifests where hollow hypocrisy, narrow bigotry, unfeeling selfishness, or any clearly deliberate vice called forth his holy indignation; — in these characters we recognise the purest and yet most popular, the most awful and yet the most amiable of all instructors. And when we read the Gospels with rightly prepared hearts, we see him with our mind's eye, as he actually was in this world, scarce less effectually than those who lived and conversed with him. We, too, "behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The Acts of the Apostles belong in some degree to the biographic class. Where the matter of a work is of the deepest moment, the mere agreeableness of its manner is of less importance. But where a striking provision has been made for pleasure, as well as benefit, it would be ingratitude as well as insensibility not to notice it. It is, indeed, impossible for a reader of taste not to be delighted with the combination of excellences

which this short but most eventful narrative exhibits. Nothing but clearness and accuracy appear to be aimed at, yet every thing which can give interest to such a work is attained. Neither Xenophon nor Cæsar could stand a comparison with it. St. Luke, in this piece, has seen every thing so clearly, has understood it so fully, and has expressed it so appositely, as to need only a simple rendering of his own exact words in order to his having, in every language, the air of an original.

The epistolary part of the New Testament is, perhaps, that with which the generality of readers are least acquainted. Some profess to be discouraged by the intricacy of the sense, particularly in the writings of St. Paul; and others fairly acknowledge, that they conceive this part of Scripture to be of less moment, as being chiefly occupied in obsolete controversies peculiar to the time in which they were written, consequently uninteresting to us. Though our limits do not admit of a particular reply to those unfounded prejudices, yet we cannot forbear regretting, what appears to be a lamentable ignorance of the nature and design of Christianity, which distinguishes our times, and which has given rise to both these suppositions. They, for example, who regard religion but as a more sublimated system of morality, and look for nothing in the Scripture but rules of moral conduct, must necessarily feel themselves at a stand, when something infinitely deeper seems to present itself before them. But, if it were first fully known, what the Christianity of the apostles actually was, their

sentiments would soon become intelligible. They treat of Christianity as an inward principle still more than as a rule of conduct. They by no means neglect the latter; but the former is their leading object. In strict observance of that maxim, so variously given by their Divine Master: — "Make the tree good, and its fruit will be good." They accordingly describe a process, which, in order to real goodness, must take place in the depths of the heart. They detect a root of evil, which disqualifies man for all real virtue, and deprives him of all real happiness. And they describe an influence proceeding from God himself, through a Divine Mediator, ready to be communicated to all who seek it, by which this evil nature is overcome, and a holy and heavenly nature formed in its room. They describe this change as taking place by means of the truths and facts revealed in the Gospel, impressing themselves by the power of God's holy Spirit upon the mind and heart; in consequence of which, new desires, new tastes, new powers, and new pursuits succeed. Things temporal sink down into complete subordination to things eternal; and supreme love to God and unfeigned charity to man become the master-passions of the soul. These are the subjects which are chiefly dwelt on in the Epistles, and they will always, in a measure, be unintelligible to those who do not "receive the truth in the love of it." Even in many human pursuits, actual practice is indispensable to a clear understanding of the principles.

If this be a fair state of the case, ought we not to study these portions of Scripture with an attention suitable to their acknowledged depth, instead of attempting to force a meaning upon them, at the expense of common sense, in order to make them seem to correspond with our superficial religion? Should we not rather endeavour to bring our religion to a conformity with their plain and literal import? Such attempts, sincerely made, would soon give clearness to the understanding; and a more than philosophic consistency, as well as a more than human energy, would be found there, where all before had seemed perplexed and obscure. We do not, however, deny, that the Epistles contain more reference than the Gospels to Jewish customs, and to a variety of local and temporary circumstances not well understood by us. Yet, though written to individual men, and to particular churches, not only general inferences, applicable to us, may be drawn from particular instructions, but, by means of them, the most important doctrines are often pointedly exhibited.

Where this truly Christian discernment is exercised, it will be evident how much it softens and enlarges the heart! how it extends and illuminates the mental view! how it quickens and invigorates feeling! how it fits the mind for at once attending to the minutest, and comprehending the vastest, things! In short, how pure, how wise, how disinterested, how heavenly, —we had almost said, how morally omnipotent it makes its complete votary!

On this head we will add but one remark more. Even through the medium of a translation, we observe a remarkable difference of manner in the apostolic writers. There is, indeed, a very close resemblance between the views and topics of St. Paul and St. Peter, though with much difference of style. But St. James and St. John differ from both these, and from each other, as much as any writers could, who agree cordially in one general end. The Christian philosopher will be able to account for this difference by its obvious correspondence with what he sees daily in natural tempers. In St. John he will discover the cast and turn of a sublimely contemplative mind, penetrating the inmost springs of moral action, and viewing the heart as alone secured and perfected by an habitual filial reverence to, and, as he expresses it, "communion with the Father of Spirits." In St. James he will see the marks of a plain and more practical mind, vigilantly guarding against the deceits and dangers of the world, and somewhat jealous lest speculation should, in any instance, be made a pretext for negligence in practice. And, lastly, he will, perhaps, recognise in St. Paul that most powerful character of mind which, being under the influence of no particular temper, but possessing each in its full strength and all in due temperament, gives no colouring to any object but what it actually possesses, pursues each valuable end in strict proportion to its worth, and varies its self-directed course, in compliance with no attraction but that of truth, of fitness, and of utility. In

such a variety, then, he will find a new evidence to the truth of Christianity, which is thus alike attested by witnesses the most diversified; and he will, with humble gratitude, adore that condescending wisdom and goodness which has thus, within the sacred volume itself, recognised, and even provided for, those distinctions of the human mind, for which weak mortals are so unwilling to make allowance in each other.

The prophetic part is mentioned last, because it peculiarly extends itself through the whole of the divine volume. It commences with the first encouraging promise which was given to man after the primeval transgression, and it occupies the last portion of the New Testament. It might naturally have been expected, that, in a revelation from the Sovereign of all events, the future designs of Providence should be so far intimated, as clearly to evince a more than human foresight, and, by consequence, a divine origin. It might also have been thought probable, that those prophecies should embrace so extended a series of future occurrences as to provide for successive confirmations of the revelation, by successive fulfilments of the predictions. And, lastly, it might be thought reasonable, that, while such intimations should be sufficiently clear to be explained by the actual event, they should not be so explicit as to gratify curiosity respecting future contingencies; such an anticipation of events being clearly unsuitable to that kind of moral government under which the Author of our nature has placed us.

It is conceived that such precisely are the characters of those predictions which are so numerous in the Scripture. They point to a continued succession of great occurrences; but, in general, with such scattered rays of light as to furnish few materials for premature speculation. Even to the prophet himself the prospect is probably enveloped in a deep mist, which, while he looks intently, seems for a short pace to open, and to present before him certain grand objects, whose fleeting appearances he imperfectly catches, but whose connection with, or remoteness from, each other he has not sufficient light to distinguish.

These remarks, however, apply most strictly to prophecies of remote events. When nearer occurrences are foretold, whether relating to the Jewish nation, or to the countries in its neighbourhood, there is often a surprising clearness, as if in these cases the intention was to direct conduct for the present, as well as confirm faith by the result. And in a few important instances, even distant futurity is so distinctly contemplated, as to make such predictions a permanent, and, to every candid reader, an irrefragable evidence, that a volume so undeniably ancient, and yet so unequivocally predictive, can be no other than divine.

Of this last class of prophecies, as most directly interesting, it may not be useless to point out the following striking examples: — The denunciation by Moses of what should be the final fate of the Jews, in case of obstinate disobedience *: —

* Deut. xxviii.

Isaiah's astonishing picture of the sufferings, death, and subsequent triumph of the Redeemer *; a prediction upon which every kind of sophistry has been tried in vain: — The dream of Nebuchadnezzar, with Daniel's interpretation †; a prophecy which contains in it an absolute demonstration of revealed religion: — Daniel's own vision of the four empires, and of that divine one which should succeed them ‡: — His amazing prophecy of the seventy weeks §, which, however involved in obscurity as to niceties of chronology, is, in clearness of prediction, a standing miracle; its fulfilment in the death of the Messiah, and the destruction of Jerusalem being as self-evident as that Cæsar meant to record his own actions in his Commentaries. To these I would add, lastly, that wonderful representation of the papal tyranny in the Apocalypse ||, which, however involving some obscure circumstances, is, nevertheless, so luminous an instance as to preclude the possibility of evasion. The extreme justness of the statement respecting papal Rome must force itself on every mind at all acquainted with the usual language of the Old Testament prophets, and with the authentic facts of ecclesiastical history.

Among circumstantial prophecies of near events may be reckoned Jeremiah's prediction of the taking of Babylon ¶ by the King of the Medes, on which the history of the event, as given by Xenophon in the Cyropedia, is the best possible

* Isaiah, liii. † Daniel, ii. ‡ Daniel, vii.
§ Daniel, ix. || Chap. xvii. ¶ Jeremiah, l. and li.

comment: — The prophecy of the fall of Tyre in Ezekiel *, in which there is the most remarkable detail of the matter of ancient commerce that is perhaps to be any where found. But of all such prophecies, that of our Saviour, respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, as given in repeated parables and express denunciations, is most deeply worthy the attention of the Christian reader.

A question has been started among scholars respecting the double sense of prophecy; but it seems astonishing to any plain reader of the Bible how it could ever become a matter of doubt. What can be more likely, for instance, than that some present event in which David was interested, perhaps his inauguration, suggested to him the subject of the second psalm? Yet, what can be more evident than that he describes a dominion infinitely beyond what can be attributed to any earthly potentate? The fact seems to be that the Jewish dispensation being, in its most leading parts, a prefiguration of the Christian dispensation, and the most celebrated persons, as well as events, being typical of what was to come, the prophetic spirit could not easily contemplate the type without being carried forward to its completion. And, therefore, in almost every case of the kind the more remote object draws the attention of the prophet, as if insensibly, from the nearer, — the greatness of the one naturally eclipsing the comparative littleness of the other. This occurs in

* Ezekiel, xxvi. and xxvii.

such a number of instances as to form one of the most prominent characters of prophecy.

We shall conclude the subject with observing on that over-ruling Providence which took care that the Scriptures of the Old Testament should be translated into the Greek language, before the original dialect became obscure, by which means, not only a most important preparation was made for the fuller manifestation which was to follow; but the sense of the Scriptures, in all important instances, was so unequivocally fixed, as to furnish both a guide for the learned Christian in after-times and a means of confronting Jewish misrepresentations with the indisputable acknowledgments of earlier Jews better used to the language, and uninfluenced by any prejudice. And, may we add, that the choice of the Greek for the original language of the New Testament is not less worthy of attention? By that wise and gracious arrangement, every lineament and every point of our divine religion has acquired an imperishable character; since the learned have agreed that no language is so capable of expressing every minute distinction and shade of thought and feeling, or is so incapable of ever becoming equivocal; the works which have been composed in it ensuring its being studied to the end of the world.

CHAP. XXXIV.

ON THE ABUSE OF TERMS. — ENTHUSIASM. — SUPERSTITION. — ZEAL FOR RELIGIOUS OPINIONS NO PROOF OF RELIGION.

To guard the mind from prejudice is no unimportant part of a royal education. Names govern the world. They carry away opinion, decide on character, and determine practice. Names, therefore, are of more importance than we are aware. We are apt to bring the quality down to the standard which the name establishes, and our practice rarely rises higher than the current term which we use when we speak of it.

The abuse of terms has at all times been an evil. To enumerate only a few instances. We do not presume to decide on the measure which gave birth to the clamour, when we assert, that in the progress of that clamour greater violence has seldom been offered to language than in the forced union of the two terms, *Liberty* and *Property* *; a conjunction of *words* by men who were, at the same time, labouring to disjoin the *things*. If liberty, in their sense, had been established, property would have had an end, or rather would have been transferred to those who, in securing what they termed *their* liberty, would have made over to themselves that property, in

* By Wilkes, and his faction.

the pretended defence of which the outcry was made. At a more recent period, the term *equality* has been substituted for that of property. The word was altered, but the principle retained. And, as the preceding clamour for liberty was only a plausible cover for making *property* change hands, so it has of late been tacked to equality, with a view to make *power* change hands. Thus terms the most popular and imposing have been uniformly used as the watch-words of tumult, plunder, and sedition.

But the abuse of terms, and especially their unnecessary adoption, is not always limited to the vulgar and the mischievous. It were to be wished that those persons of a better cast, who are strenuous in counteracting the evils themselves, would never naturalise any terms which convey revolutionary ideas. In England, at least, let us have no *civic* honours, no *organisation* of plans.

There are, perhaps, few words which the reigning practice has more warped from its legitimate meaning and ancient usage than the term *proud*. Let us try whether Johnson's definition sanctions the adopted use. "Proud," says that accurate philologist, "means *elated — haughty — daring — presumptuous — ostentatious*," &c. &c. Yet, do we not continually hear, not merely the journalist and the pamphleteer, but the legislator and the orator, sages who give law, not to the land only, but to the language, using the term exclusively, in an honourable sense? — "They are proud to acknowledge," — "proud to confess." Instead of the

heartfelt language of gratitude for a deliverance or a victory, we hear of "a proud day," — "a proud circumstance," — "a proud event;" thus raising to the dignity of virtue a term to which lexicographers and moralists have annexed an odious, and divines an unchristian sense. If pride be thus enrolled in the list of virtues, must not humility, by a natural consequence, be turned over to the catalogue of vices? If pride was made for man, has not the Bible asserted a falsehood?

In the age which succeeded to the Reformation, "holiness" and "practical piety" were the terms employed by divines when they would inculcate that conduct which is suitable to Christians. The very words conveyed a solemnity to the mind, calculated to assist in raising it to the prescribed standard. But those very terms being unhappily used, during the usurpation, as marks to cover the worst purposes, became, under Charles, epithets of ridicule and reproach; and were supposed to imply hypocrisy and false pretence. And when, in a subsequent period, decency resumed her reign, and virtue was countenanced, and religion respected; yet mere decorum was too often substituted for religious energy; nor was there such a general superiority to the dread of censure as was sufficient to restore the use of terms, which hypocrisy had abused, and licentiousness derided.*

* It is, however, to be observed, that at no period, perhaps, in English history, was there a more strict attention to public morals, or a more open avowal of religion, than during the short reign of Queen Mary. Nothing was, with that ex-

Indifference in some assumed the name of moderation, and zeal in others either grew cool, or was ashamed to appear warm. The standard of language was either let down to accommodate itself to the standard of practice, or piety itself was taken some notes lower, to adapt it to the established phraseology. Thus, morality, for instance, which heretofore had only been used (and very properly) as one name amongst many, to express right conconduct, now began to be erected into the exclusive term. The term itself is most unexceptionable. Would that all who adopt it, acted up to the rectitude which it implies! but partly from its having been antecedently used to express the pagan virtues; partly from its having been set up by modern philosophers, as opposed to the peculiar graces of Christianity, and, consequently, converted by them into an instrument for decrying religion; and partly because many who profess to write theories of morality have founded them on a mere worldly principle, we commonly see it employed, not in its own distinct and limited meaning, but, on the con-

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cellent Princess, so momentous an object, as that religion might attain its just credit, and diffuse its effectual influences amongst society. Upon this her deepest thoughts were fixed; to this her most assiduous endeavours were directed. And it was not wholly in vain. A spirit of pious activity spread itself both through clergy and laity. Religious men took fresh courage to avow themselves, and merciful men laboured in the cause of humanity with increased zeal and success. It seems to have been under this brief but auspicious government, that the dissolute habits of the two former reigns received their first effectual check.

trary, as a substitute for that comprehensive principle of elevated, yet rational piety, which forms at once the vital spring and essential characteristic of Christian conduct.

It is necessary, also, to apprise those whose minds we are forming, that when they wish to enquire into the characters of men, it is of importance to ascertain the principles of him who gives the character, in order to obtain a fair knowledge of him of whom the character is given. To exemplify this remark by the term enthusiasm. While the wise and temperate Christian deprecates enthusiasm as highly pernicious, even when he hopes it may be honest, — justly ascribing it to a perturbed and unsound, or, at least, an over-eager and weak mind, — the irreligious man, who hates piety, when he fancies he only hates fanaticism, applies the term enthusiast to every religious person, however sober his piety, or however correct his conduct.

But even he who is far from remarkable for pious ardours, may incur the stigma of enthusiasm, when he happens to come under the censure of one who piques himself on still greater latitude of sentiment. Thus, he who professes to believe in "the only begotten Son of God as in glory equal with the Father," will be deemed an enthusiast by him who embraces the chilling doctrines of Socinus. And we have heard, as if it were no uncommon thing, of a French philosopher of the highest class, accounting his friend *un peu fanatique*, merely because the latter had some *suspicion* that there was

a God. In fact, we may apply to enthusiasm what has been said on another occasion: —

> Ask where's the North — At York, 'tis on the Tweed;
> In Scotland, at the Orcades; and there,
> At Greenland, Zembla ———

But, it may be asked, has religious enthusiasm, after all, no definite meaning? or are religion and frenzy *really* so nearly allied, that no clearly distinctive line can be drawn between them? One of our most eminent writers has told us, that "enthusiasm is a kind of excess in devotion, and that superstition is the excess, not only of devotion, but of religion in general." — A strange definition! For what is devotion, and what is religion, if we cannot be in earnest in them without hazarding our rationality, which, however, must be the case, if this definition were accurate? For, if the excess of devotion were enthusiasm, and the excess of religion were superstition, it would follow, that to advance in either would be to approximate to fanaticism. Of course, he who wished to retain his mental sanity must listen with caution to the apostolic precept, of *growing* in grace.

But, with all due respect to Mr. Addison, may we not justly question, whether there can be such a thing as an excess of either devotion or religion, in the proper sense of the terms? We never seriously suppose that any one can be too wise, too pure, or too benevolent. If at any time we use a language of this apparent import, we always conceive the idea of some spurious intermixture, or

injudicious mode of exercise. But when we confine our thoughts to the principle itself, we do not apprehend that it *can* become too predominant, — to be too virtuous being just as inconceivable as to be too happy.

Now if this be true of any single virtue, must it not hold equally good respecting the parent principle of all virtue? What is religion or devotion (for when we speak of either, as a principle, it is, in fact, a synonyme of the other,) but the "so loving what God has commanded, and desiring what he has promised, as that, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found?" Now can there be excess in this? We may doubtless *misunderstand* God's commands, and *misconstrue* his promises, and, in either way, instead of attaining that holy and happy fixedness of heart, become the victims of restless perturbation. But if there be no error in our apprehension, can there be any excess in our love? What does God *command?* Every thing that tends to our personal, social, political, as well as eternal well-being. Can we, then, feel too deep love for the sum of all moral excellence? But what does God *promise?* Guidance, protection, all necessary aids, and influences here; and hereafter, "fulness of joy and pleasures at his right hand for evermore." Can such blessings as these be too cordially desired? Amid

> The heart-aches, and the thousand natural shocks
> Which flesh is heir to,

can our hopes of future happiness be too cheering, or our power of rising above the calamities of mortality be too habitual, or too effectual? — Such are the questions obviously suggested by the supposition of such a thing as excess in religion. And doubtless the answer of every serious and reflecting mind must be, that in "pure and undefiled religion;" in "loving the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbour as ourselves," the idea of *excess* is as incongruous and inadmissible, as that of a happy life being too long, or of the joys of heaven being less desirable, because they are eternal.

But if, instead of cultivating and advancing in this love of God and man, — instead of loving what God has really commanded, and desiring what he has clearly promised in his holy word, — this word be neglected, and the suggestions of an ardent or of a gloomy fancy be substituted in its room, then the person becomes, in the strictest and truest sense, a fanatic; and as his natural temperament may happen to be sanguine or saturnine, he rises into imaginary raptures, or sinks down into torturing apprehensions, and slavish self-inflictions.

Here, then, if I am not mistaken, we may discover the real nature of both enthusiasm and superstition. It is not *excess* of devotion which constitutes the one, nor *excess* of religion, in general, which leads to the other. But both are the consequence of a *radical misconception* of religion. Each alike implies a compound of ignorance and

passion; and, as the person is disposed to hope or fear, he becomes enthusiastical on the one hand, or superstitious on the other. He in whom *fear* predominates, most naturally mistakes *what God commands*, and instead of taking that *law* for his rule, "whose seat is the bosom of God, and whose voice the harmony of the world *," in a most unhappy manner becomes a law unto himself, multiplying observances which have nothing to recommend them but their irksomeness or uncouthness, and acting as if the way to propitiate his Maker were by tormenting himself. He, on the contrary, in whom the *hopeful* passions are prevalent, no less naturally misconceives what *God has promised*, and pleases himself with the prospect, or persuades himself into the imaginary possession, of extraordinary influences and supernatural communications. Both, it is evident, mean to pursue religion, but neither has sufficient judgment to ascertain its real nature. Perhaps, in general, some mental morbidness is at the bottom, which, when of the depressive kind, disposes to the superstitious view of religion, and, when of the elevating kind, to the enthusiastical.

Religion, the religion of the Scriptures, is itself an exquisite temperament, in which all the virtues of which man is capable are harmoniously blended. He, therefore, who studies the Scriptures, and draws from thence his ideas and sentiments of religion, takes the best method to escape both

* Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, conclusion of the first book.

enthusiasm and superstition. Even infidelity is no security against either. But it is absolutely impossible for an intelligent votary of scriptural Christianity to be in any respect fanatical. True fanatics, therefore, are apt to neglect the Scriptures, except so far as they can turn them to their own particular purpose. The Romish church, for example, became negligent of the Scriptures, nearly in proportion as it became superstitious; and every striking instance of enthusiasm, if enquired into, will be found to exemplify the same dereliction. In a word, Christianity is eternal truth; and they who soar *above* truth, as well as they who sink *below* it, equally overlook the standard by which rational action is to be regulated; whereas to adhere steadily to this, is to avoid all extremes, and escape, not only the tendency toward pernicious excess, but any danger of falling into it.

Did we accustom ourselves to exact definitions, we should not only call the disorderly religionist an enthusiast; we should also feel that if irrational confidence, unfounded expectations, and assumptions without a basis, be enthusiasm, then is the term most justly applicable to the mere worldly moralist. For does not he wildly assume effects to be produced without their proper means, who looks for virtue without piety, for happiness without holiness, for reformation without repentance, for repentance without divine assistance, for divine assistance without prayer, and for acceptance with

God without regard to that Mediator whom God has ordained to be our great High Priest?

But, while accuracy of definition is thus recommended, let it not be forgotten that there is need on all sides of exercising a candid judgment. Let not the conscientious Christian suspect that the advocate for morality intends by the term to depreciate religion, unless it appear that he makes morality the root as well as the produce of goodness. Nor let the moralist, whose affections are less lively, and whose views are less elevated, deem the religious man a fanatic, because he sometimes adopts the language of Scripture to express feelings to which human terms are not always adequate. We mean not to justify, but to condemn, as a gross defect of good sense, as well as of taste and elegance, that ill-conditioned phraseology, which, by disfiguring the comeliness of piety, lessens its dignity, and injures its interests. Doubtless, a good understanding cannot be more usefully exercised, nor can the effects of mental cultivation be better shown, than in bringing every aid of a sound judgment, and every grace of a correct style, into the service of that divine religion, which does not more contain all that is just and pure, than it coalesces with all that is "lovely, and of good report."

The too frequent abuse of such terms as *moderation*, *candour*, *toleration*, &c. should be pointed out to those whose high station prevents their communication with the world at large. It should be explained, that moderation, in the new diction-

ary, means the abandonment of some of the most essential doctrines of Christianity; that candour, in the same school of philology, denotes a latitudinarian indifference as to the comparative merits of all religious systems; that toleration signifies such a low idea of the value of revealed truth, and perhaps such a doubt even of its existence, as makes a man careless whether it be maintained or trampled on, vindicated or calumniated. A toleration of *every* creed generally ends in an indifference to *all*, if it does not originally spring from a disbelief of all. Even the noble term *rational*, which so peculiarly belongs to true religion, is frequently used to strip Christianity of her highest attributes and her sublimest energies; as if, in order to be rational, divine influences must be excluded; or, as if it were either suitable to our necessities, or worthy of God, that when he was giving "his word to be a light to our paths," he should make that light a kind of moral moonshine, instead of accompanying it with such a vital warmth, as might invigorate our hearts, as well as direct our footsteps.

Though it would be absurd for a prince to become a wrangling polemic, like Henry VIII., or a "royal doctor," like the first James, yet he should possess so much information as to be enabled to form a reasonable judgment between contending parties, and to know the existing state of religion. And, that he may learn to detect the artifices of men of loose principles, he should be apprised, that the profane and the pious do not engage on equal

terms; that the carelessness of the irreligious gives him an apparent air of good humour, and his levity the semblance of wit and gaiety; while his Christian adversary ventures not to risk his soul for a *bon-mot*, nor dares to be witty on topics which concern his eternal interests.

It will be important, on the other hand, to show, that it is very possible to be zealous for religious opinions, without possessing any religion; nay, that a fiery religious zeal has been even found compatible with the most flagitious morals. The church of Rome, so late as the sixteenth century, presented numberless examples of men, whose lives were a tissue of vices, which cannot so much as be named, who yet, at the risk of life, would fight in defence of a ceremony, for the preservation of a consecrated vase or a gift devoted to a monastery.

To show that it is possible to be zealous for religious opinions without being religious, we need not look back to the persecuting powers of pagan or papal Rome; nor need we select our instances from the disciples of Dominic; nor from such monsters as Catharine di Medici; nor from such sanguinary bigots as the narrow-souled Mary, nor the dark-minded Philip. Examples from persons less abhorrent from human feelings, more mixed characters, the dark shades of whose minds are blended with lighter strokes, and whose vices are mitigated with softer qualities, may be more profitably considered, as approaching nearer to the common standard of human life.

That a prince may be very zealous for religious

opinions and observances, and yet be so defective in moral virtue, as to be both personally and politically profligate, is exemplified in our second James, who renounced three kingdoms for his religion, yet neither scrupled to live in the habitual violation of the seventh commandment, nor to employ the inhuman Jeffries as his chancellor.

Harlai, Archbishop of Paris, distinguished himself by his zeal in attacking heresy; so all religion was called except that of the Jesuits. His activity proceeded from no love of piety, but from a desire to make his way at court, where zeal, just then, happened to be the fashion. His religious activity, however, neither prevented nor cured the notorious licentiousness of his moral conduct.* The king, his master, fancied, that to punish Jansenism, was an indubitable proof of religion; but to persecute Protestantism, he conceived to be the consummation of piety. What a lesson for princes, to see him, after the revocation of the edict of Nantz, gratefully swallowing the equally false and nauseous compliments of his clergy, for having, to borrow their own phrase, *without violent methods made the whole kingdom of one opinion, and united all his subjects to the faith of Rome!* Iniquitous flattery! when FOUR MILLIONS of those subjects were either

* It was a fact well known in the court of Versailles, that Madame de Montespan, during the long period in which she continued the favourite mistress of the King (by whom she had seven children), was so strict in her religious observances, that, lest she should violate the austerity of fasting, her bread, during Lent, was constantly *weighed*.

groaning under torture, or flying into exile; turning infidels, if they resolved to retain their property; or chained to the gallies, if they preferred their conscience to their fortune!

As the afflicted Huguenots were not permitted to carry their complaints to the foot of the throne, the deluded king fancied his bloody agents to be mild ministers, and the tortured Protestants to be mischievous heretics. But, though the kingdom was, in many parts, nearly depopulated by exile and executions, the sword, as usual, made not one proselyte. The subjects were tortured, but they were not converted. The rack is a bad rhetorician. The gallies may harass the body, but do not convince the understanding, nor enforce articles of faith.*

Under all these crimes and calamities, Louis, as a French memorialist observes, was not ashamed to hear, what Boileau was not ashamed to sing, —

L'Univers sous ton regne a-t-il des Malheureux?

Colbert, who was a wise man, might have taught his royal master, that in this persecution there was as little policy as piety; and that he was not only injuring his conscience but his country. By banishing so many useful subjects he impoverished the state doubly, not only by robbing it of the in-

* Louvois and his master would have done wisely to have adopted the opinion of those two great ministers of Henry IV., who, when pressed to persecute, replied, that they thought "it was better to have a peace which had two religions, than a war which had none."

genuity, the manufactures, and the labour of such multitudes, but by transferring to hostile countries all the industry and talents which he was driving from his own. If the treachery of detaining the Protestants, under false promises, which were immediately violated, is to be charged on Louvois, the crime of blindly confiding in such a minister is to be charged on the king.

How little had this monarch profited by the example given, under similar circumstances, by Louis XII.! When some of the pious Waldenses, while they were improving his barren lands in Provence by their virtuous industry, had been grievously persecuted through false representations, that prudent prince commanded the strictest enquiry to be made into their real character. The result was, that he was so perfectly convinced of their innocence, that he not only protected them during the rest of his reign, but had the magnanimity to declare, that "they were better men than himself and his Catholic subjects."

Happy had it been for himself and for the world, if the Emperor Charles V. had instituted the same enquiries; happy, if in the meridian of his power he had studied the character of mankind to as good purpose as he afterwards, in his monastic retreat, studied the mechanism of watches! Astonished to find that, after the closest application, he never could bring any two to go just alike, he expressed deep regret at his own folly, in having bestowed so much time and pains in the

fruitless attempt of bringing mankind to an exact uniformity in their religious opinions. But the discovery was made too late: he ended where he should have begun.

CHAP. XXXV.

THE REFORMATION.

In order to increase the royal pupil's reverence for Christianity, before she is herself able to appreciate its value, she should be taught, that it did not steal into the world in the days of darkness and ignorance, when the spirit of enquiry was asleep, but appeared in the most enlightened period of the Roman empire. That its light dawned not on the remoter regions of the earth, but on a province of that empire, whose peculiar manners had already attracted much notice, and whose local situation placed it particularly within the view of surrounding nations. Whereas the religion of Mahomet, and the corruptions of popery, which started up almost together, arose when the spirit of investigation, learning, and philosophy, had ceased to exert itself. That, during those dark ages, both Christianity and human learning were nearly extinguished; and that, as both had sunk together, so both together awoke from their long slumber. The restoration of letters was the restoration of religion also; the free access to the ancient authors being one grand instrument of the revival of pure Christianity.

The learning which existed in the church antecedently to the Reformation was limited to very

few, and was, in the general, but meagre and superficial; and the purposes to which it was confined formed an effectual obstacle to substantial improvement. Instead of being employed in investigating the evidences of Christianity, or in elucidating the analogy of Christian principles, with the laws of the natural and the exigences of the moral world, it was pressed into the service of what was called school-divinity; a system, which, perhaps, had providentially been not without its uses at a previous period, especially when under the discretion of a sound and upright mind, as having served both to elicit and exercise the intellect of a ruder age. Study and industry, however they may be misapplied, are always good in themselves; and almost any state is better than hopeless inanity. These schoolmen, perhaps, sustained the cause of religion, when she might utterly have sunk, though with arms little suited to make their support effectual, or to produce solid practical benefit, either to the church or the people. Some of the earlier scholastic divines, though tedious, and somewhat trifling, were, however, close reasoners, as well as pious men, though they afterwards sunk in rationality, as they increased in quibbling and subtlety. Yet, defective as their efforts were, they had been useful, as they had contributed to oppose infidelity, and to keep alive some love of piety and devotion, in that season of drowsy inactivity. But, at the period to which we refer, their theology had become little better than a mazy labyrinth of trivial, and not seldom of pernicious sophistry. Subtle

squisitions, metaphysical niceties, unintelligible
)scurities, and whimsical distinctions, were sub-
ituted in the place of revealed truth; for revealed
uth was not sufficiently intricate for the specula-
)ns of those puzzling theologians, of whom Eras-
us said, that "they had brought it to be a matter
so much wit to be a Christian, that ordinary
:ads were not able to reach it." And, as genu-
e Christianity was not sufficiently ingenious for
ese whimsical doctors, neither was it sufficiently
iant and accommodating to suit the corrupt state
public morals.

Almost entirely overlooking the Scriptures, the
hoolmen had built schemes and systems on the
ithority of the Fathers, some of them spurious
ies. The philosophy of Aristotle had also been
sorted to for some of the chief materials of the
ystem; so that, as the author of the History of
ie Council of Trent informs us, "if it had not
een for Aristotle, the church had wanted many
rticles of faith."

The early reformers defeated these sophisters,
y opposing, to their unsubstantial system, the plain
nadulterated Bible. The very text of Holy
cripture, and the most sober, rational, and simple
eductions from thence, furnished the ground-
ork of their arguments. And to this noble
urpose they applied that sound learning which
Providence had caused to revive just at the neces-
ary period. Their skill in the Greek and Hebrew
anguages enabled them to read the original Scrip-
ures, and to give correct translations of them to

the public. And, in this respect, they had an important advantage over the school divines, who did not understand the language in which their master Aristotle had written. It is no wonder, if an heterogeneous theology should have been compounded out of such discordant materials as were made up from spurious fathers, and an ill-understood pagan philosopher. The works of this great author, which, by an inconsistency not uncommon in the history of man, had not long before been prohibited by a papal decree, and burnt by public authority, came, in the sixteenth century, to be considered as little less than canonical!

But this attachment to sophistry and jargon was far from being the worst feature of the period in question. The generality of the clergy were sunk into the grossest ignorance, of which instances are recorded scarcely credible in our day of general knowledge. It is difficult to say whether the ecclesiastics had more entirely discarded useful learning, or Scripture truth. In the place, therefore, of the genuine religion of the Bible, they substituted false miracles, lying legends, purchased pardons, and preposterous penances. A procedure which became the more popular, as it introduced a religion which did not insist on the inconvenient appendage of a good life; those who had money enough easily procuring indemnity for a bad one; and to the profligate and the affluent, the *purchase* of good works was certainly more agreeable than the *practice*.

We are far from asserting, that there were no

ixtures of infirmity in the instruments which complished the great work of the Reformation. ıey were fallible men. But it is now evident every sincere enquirer, that many of their trans-ions, which have been represented by their versaries as corrupt and criminal, only appeared :h to those who did not take their motives, and critical circumstances of the times, into the :ount, or who had an interest in misrepresenting :m. Many of those actions, which, through se colourings, were made to appear unfavourable, now clearly proved to have been virtuous and nourable; especially when we take the then ıation of things, and the flagitious conduct of priests and pontiffs with whom they had to deal, o the account.

Mr. Hume has been among the foremost to ive and inflame the malignant reports respect-them. He allows, indeed, the *inflexible intre-ity with which they braved dangers, tortures, l even death itself.* But still they were, in his mation, the "fanatical and enraged reformers." d he carefully suggests, through the course of history, that *fanaticism is the characteristic of Protestant religion.* The terms "Protestant ıticism," and "fanatical churches," he repeatedly s. He has even the temerity to assert, in con-liction to all credible testimony, that the ɔrmers placed all merit in "a mysterious spe-s of faith, in inward vision, rapture, and ecstasy." charge, to say nothing of truth and candour, vorthy of Mr. Hume's good sense, and exten-

sive means of information. For there is no fact better known, than that these eminently wise men never pretended to illuminations and impulses. What they undertook honestly, they conducted soberly. They pretended to no inspiration; they did not even pretend to introduce a *new*, but only to restore to its pristine purity the *old* religion. "They respected government, practised and taught submission to civil rulers, and desired only the liberty of that conscience which God has made free." *

But though, in accomplishing the great work of the Reformation, reason and human wisdom were most successfully exercised; though the divine interference was not manifested by the working of miracles, or the gift of supernatural endowments, yet who can doubt that this great work was directed by the hand of Heaven, especially when we consider the wonderful predisposition of causes, the extraordinary combination of circumstances, the long chain of gradual but constantly progressive occurrences, by which this grand event was brought about? The successive as well as contemporary production of singular characters, calculated to promote its *general* accomplishment, and each peculiarly fitted for his own *respective* work! So

* See an excellent appendix to Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, vol. iv. p. 136., on the *spirit* of the reformers, and the injustice of Mr. Hume, by that truly elegant, candid, and accomplished scholar, and most amiable man, the late Rev. Dr. Archibald Maclaine,

The lover and the love of human kind.

many unconscious or unwilling instruments made subservient to one great purpose! — Friends and enemies, even Mussulmen and popes, contributing, certainly without intending it, to its advancement! — Mahomet banishing learning from the East, that it might providentially find a shelter in these countries, where the new opinions were to be propagated! — Several successive sovereign pontiffs, collecting books, and patronising that literature which was so soon to be directed against their own domination! — But, above all, the multiplication of contemporary popes, weakening the reverence of the people, by occasioning a schism in the church, and exhibiting its several heads wandering about, under the ludicrous circumstance of each claiming infallibility for himself, and denying it to his competitor! — Infallibility, thus split, was discredited, and in a manner annihilated. — To these preparatory circumstances we may add the infatuation, or rather judicial blindness of the papal power; the errors, even in worldly prudence, committed by Leo, a pontiff otherwise of admirable talents! — The half-measures, adopted at one time, of inefficient violence; at another, of ineffectual lenity! — The temporary want of sagacity in an ecclesiastical court, which was usually remarkable for political acuteness! — The increasing aptitude of men's minds to receive truth, in proportion as events occurred to mature it! — Some who loved learning, and were indifferent to religion, favouring the Reformation as a cause connected with good letters; the old doctrines be-

coming united with the idea of ignorance, as the new ones were with that of knowledge! — The preparatory invention of printing, without which the revival of learning would have been of little general use, and the dispersion of the Scriptures slow, and inconsiderable! — Some able and keen-sighted men, working vigorously from a perception of existing abuses, who yet wanted sufficient zeal for the promotion of religious truth!

The pointed wit, the sarcastic irony, and powerful reasoning of Erasmus, together with his profound theological learning, directed against the corruptions of the church, with such force as to shake the credit of the clergy, and be of the utmost service to that cause which he wanted the righteous courage systematically to defend! * The unparalleled zeal, abilities, and integrity of Luther! His bold genius, and adventurous spirit, not contenting itself, as the other reformers had done, with attacking notorious errors, and stigmatising monstrous abuses; but sublimely exerted in establishing, or rather restoring, the great fundamentals of Christianity! While Erasmus, with that truly classic taste of which he was the chief reviver, so elegantly satirised the false views of God and reli-

* Every elegant scholar must naturally be an admirer of Erasmus. We should be sorry to incur the censure of any such by regretting, that the wit and indignation of this fine genius sometimes carried him too great lengths. Impiety, doubtless, was far from his heart; yet in some of his colloquies, when he only professed to attack the errors of popery, religion itself is wounded by strokes which have such a tendency to profaneness as to give pain to the sober reader.

gion, which the Romish church entertained, Luther's aim was to acquire true scriptural notions of both. Ridicule served to expose the old religion, but something nobler was necessary to establish the new. It was for Erasmus to shake to its foundation the monstrous system of indulgences; it remained for Luther to restore, not to invent, the doctrine of salvation by remission of sins through a Mediator. While his predecessors, and even coadjutors, had been satisfied with pulling down the enormous mass of corruptions, the mighty hand of the Saxon reformer not only removed the rubbish, but erected a fair fabric of sound doctrine in its place. The new edifice arose in its just symmetry, and derives impregnable strength, in consequence of its having been erected on a broad foundation. Nothing short of the ardour of Luther could have maintained this great cause in one stage, while perhaps the discreet temperance of Melancthon was necessary to its support in another! — The useful violence of Henry in attacking the pope, with a zeal as furious as if he himself had not been an enemy to the Reformation, exhibiting a wonderful illustration of that declaration of the Almighty, that *the fierceness of man shall turn to his praise!* — The meek wisdom of Cranmer, by which he was enabled to moderate the otherwise uncontrollable temper of his royal master! — The undaunted spirit and matchless intrepidity of Elizabeth, which effectually struggled for, and finally established it! — These, and a thousand other concur-

ring circumstances, furnish the most unclouded evidence, to every mind not blinded by prejudice, that the divine AUTHOR of Christianity was also, though by the agency of human means and instruments, the RESTORER of it.

CHAP. XXXVI.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND OBSERVANCES. — THEY ARE SUITED TO THE NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY, AND PARTICULARLY ADAPTED TO THE CHARACTER OF MAN.

THAT torrent of vices and crimes which the French Revolution has disembogued into society, may be so clearly and indisputably traced to the source of infidelity, that it has, in a degree, become fashionable to profess a belief in the truths, and a conviction of the value, of Christianity. But, at the same time, it has too naturally happened, that we have fallen into the habit of defending religion, almost exclusively, on political and secular grounds; as if Christianity consisted merely in our not being atheists or anarchists. A man, however, may be removed many stages from the impiety of French infidels, and yet be utterly destitute of real religion.

Many, not openly profane, but even entertaining a respect for the political uses of religion, have a way of generalising their ideas, so as to dismiss the Revelation from the account. Others, again, who in this last respect agree with the former class, affect a certain superiority over the low contracted notions of churchmen and collegians. These assert, that, if virtue be practised, and public order preserved, the motive on which the one

is practised, and the other maintained, is not worth contending for. Many there are, who, without formally rejecting Christianity, talk of it at large, in general, or in the abstract. As if it were at once to exempt themselves from the trouble of religion, and to escape the infamy of atheism, these men affect to think so highly of the Supreme Being, whose temple is universal space, that he needs not be worshipped in temples made with hands. And forgetting that the world which he thought it worth while to create, he will certainly think it worth while to govern, they assert, that he is too great to attend to the concerns of such petty beings as we are, and too exalted to listen to our prayers. That it is a narrow idea which we form of his attributes, to fancy that one *day* or one *place* is more acceptable to him than another. That all religions are equally pleasing to God, provided the worshipper be sincere. That the establishment of a public ministry is perhaps a good expedient of political wisdom for awing the vulgar; but that every man is his own priest. That all errors of opinion are innocent; and that the Almighty is too just to punish any man for merely speculative tenets.

But these lofty contemners of institutions, observances, days, ordinances, and priests, evince, by their very objections, that they are not more ignorant of the nature of God, as he has been pleased to reveal himself in Scripture, than of the character of man, to whose dispositions, wants, desires, distresses, infirmities, and sins, the spirit of Chris-

ınity, as unfolded in the Gospel, is so wonderfully
:commodated. This admirable congruity would be
itself sufficient, were there no other proof to
ıtablish the divine authority of our religion.
rivate prayer, public worship, the observation of
ıe Sabbath, a standing ministry, sacramental or-
inances, are all of them so admirably adapted to
ıose sublimely mysterious cravings of the mind,
hich distinguish man from all inferior animals,
y rendering him the subject of hopes and fears,
hich nothing earthly can realise or satisfy, that it
difficult to say, whether these sacred institutions
ost bespeak the wisdom or the goodness of that
ıpreme benefactor, who alone could have thus
)plied a remedy, because he alone could have
enetrated the most hidden recesses of that na-
ıre which required it. Religion, in fact, is
ot more essential to man, than, in the present
ate of things, those appointments are essential to
:ligion. And, accordingly, we see, that when they
·e rejected, however its unprofitable generalities
ıay be professed, religion itself practically, and in
etail, is renounced. Nor can it be kept alive in
·eatures, so abounding in moral, and so exposed
) natural evil, by mere metaphysical distinctions,
r a bare intellectual conception of divinity. In
eings whose minds are so liable to wander, reli-
ion, to be sustained, requires to be substantiated
ıd fixed, to be realised and invigorated. Con-
:ious of our own infirmity, we ought to look
)r every outward aid to improve every internal
race; and, consequently, ought gladly to submit to

the control of habits, and the regularity of institutions. Even in the common pursuits of life, our fugitive and unsteady thoughts require to be tied down by exercises, duties, and external circumstances. And while the same expedients are no less necessary to insure the outward observances of religion, instead of obstructing, they promote its spirituality; for they are not more fitted to attract the senses of the ignorant, than they are to engage the thoughts, and fix the attention, of the enlightened. While, therefore, in order to get rid of imaginary burdens, and suspected penalties, men are contending for a philosophical religion, and an imaginary perfection, of which the mind, while incorporated with matter, is little capable, they lose the benefit of those salutary means and instruments, so admirably adapted to the state of our minds and the constitution of our nature. Means and instruments, which, on a sober enquiry into their origin, will be found as awfully sanctioned as they are obviously suitable; — in a word, which will be found, and this, when proved, puts an end to the controversy, to be the appointments of God himself.

The Almighty has most certainly declared, that he will be worshipped in spirit and in truth. But, does it therefore follow, that he will not be worshipped in *churches?* — We know that *all* our days are his, and for the use of all we are accountable to him. But does this invalidate the duty of making *Sunday* more peculiarly his? — We are commanded to "pray without ceasing; in every

ng to give thanks;" that is, to carry about with a heart disposed to pray, and a spirit inclined thankfulness; but is this any argument against : enjoining on ourselves certain stated times of re regular prayer, and fixed periods of more press thanksgiving: is it not obvious, that the glect of the religious observance of Sunday, for mple, results, in fact, from an irreligious state the heart, however gravely philosophic reasons the omission may be assigned? Is it not ob- us, also, that the very recurrenee of appointed sons serves to stir us up to the performance of duties allotted to them? The philosopher may ride this as a mechanical religion, which re- ires to have its springs wound up, and stand in ed of external impulses to set it a-going. But Christian feels, that though he is neither to gulate his devotions by his crucifix, nor to cal- late them by his beads, yet, while his intellectual rt is encumbered with a body, liable to be misled temptation without, and impeded by corruption thin, he stands in need of every supplemental l to remind, to restrain, and to support him. ese, therefore, are not helps which superstition s devised, or fallible man invented. Infinite sdom, doubtless, foreseeing that what was left pendent on the choice of mutable human will to observed, would probably not be observed at l, did not leave such a duty to such a contingency, t established these institutions as part of his itten word; the lawgiver himself also sanctioning e law by his own practice.

It would be well if these men of large views and philosophical conceptions, would consider, if there be nothing in the very structure of the human mind, we had almost said, in the very constitution of nature, which might lead us to expect, that religion *would* have those grosser and more substantial parts and relations which we have represented; instead of being that entirely thin and spiritual essence, of which they vainly dream. It was reserved for a philosopher of our own nation to show, that the richest possessions of the most capacious mind are only the well-arranged and variegated ideas which originally entered in through the medium of the senses, or which we derive from contemplating the operations of our own minds, when employed on those ideas of sensation. But, if material bodies are the sources from whence general knowledge is derived, why is every thing to be incorporeal which respects religion? If innate ideas have no existence in the human mind, why are our religious notions not to be derived from external objects?

Plato, the purest of heathen philosophers, and the nearest to those who derived their light from Heaven, failed most essentially in reducing his theory to practice. He seems to have supposed, that we possess certain ready-framed notions of every thing essential to moral happiness; and that contemplation of the *chief good*, and subjugation of animal nature, were all that was necessary to moral perfection. Is it not then most worthy of attention, that the Holy Scripture differs from the plan of

e Grecian sage, just where he himself differs
›m truth and nature, as developed by their most
curate observer, the sagacious and venerated
›cke? Man, according to this profound rea-
ner, derives the original stock of his ideas from
jects placed in his view, which strike upon his
nses. Revelation, as if on this very principle,
esents to man impressive objects. From the
eation to the deluge, and still more from the call
Abraham, when we may say that our religion
mmences, to the giving of the Holy Ghost, after
ır Saviour's ascension, the period in which we
ay deem its character completed, we are in-
ructed, in a great measure, by a series of FACTS.
ı the earlier period, especially, we do not meet
ith theoretic descriptions of the divine nature, but
e see the eternal God himself, as with our mind's
'e, visibly manifesting himself to the patriarchs,
xemplifying his attributes to their senses, and by
terpositions the most impressive, both in a way
judgment and of mercy, training them to appre-
ɛnd him, in the mode of all others the most accom-
odated to the weakness of human nature.

Thus we see a religion, in some degree *a matter-
f-fact religion*, growing gradually to its com-
letion, until "HE, who at sundry times and in
ivers manners, had spoken to the fathers by the
rophets, spoke in these last days by his Son."

And thus we observe the first preachers of
hristianity, not philosophising on abstract truths,
ut plainly bearing witness to what had been
ransacted in their presence: —"The Word was

made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." And again, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

This, then, is the particular characteristic of Christianity, that, from its origin to its final consummation, it considers *man* critically *as he is;* and that is, not as he was deemed by the most enlightened sages of earlier times, but as he has been discovered to be by one of the most penetrating minds in the world, seventeen hundred years after the Christian era. To this, now universally acknowledged notion of man, every thing is adapted, both in what is recorded and what is enjoined in the Scripture. Every observance relates to *facts*, and is fitted to impress them. To strip Christianity, therefore, of any of the observances, which are really of scriptural appointment, would be to sublimate it into philosophical inefficacy. In common life, we see the affections little engaged in abstract speculation. They, then, only are moved when those sensible images, which the laws of nature have made moving, are aptly presented to them.

What, for example, could all the mathematical truth in the world do, in exciting our affections, compared with a tale of human misery, or human magnanimity, even though known to be fabricated for our amusement? When Christianity, then, is so obviously, in a great measure, a business of the affections, that we are then only under its influence, when we *love and delight in*, as well as

assent to, or *reason upon* its principles; shall we cavil at that religion, which alone accomplishes its end, on account of those very features of it which, on every ground of philosophy, and by every proof of efficacy, were the fact to be candidly investigated, render it such as it must be, in order to answer its purpose?

There cannot be a more conclusive internal evidence of our holy religion than this — that in every principle which it establishes, in every lesson which it inculcates, and in every example which it offers, there is throughout one character that invariably prevails, which is, the truest and soundest *good sense*. The Scripture, while, in the main, so plain and simple, "that he may run that readeth," has accordingly been ever most prized by its profoundest and most sagacious readers; and the longer and more attentively such persons have studied it, the higher has their estimation risen. We will not adduce cases from that constellation of shining lights, the learned churchmen, whose testimony might be objected to, from the very circumstance which ought to enhance its value, their professional attachment, because the name of Bacon, Boyle, and Locke is sufficient.

It will be found, on the most impartial scrutiny, that that plan or practice which is clearly opposed to Scripture, is no less really hostile to right reason and the true interests of man; and it is scarcely to be doubted, that if we could investigate the multiform history of individuals in the Christian world, it would be indisputable, that a deep

impression of Scripture facts and principles had proved, beyond comparison, the most successful preservative against the worst evils of human life. Doubtless, it has been found most difficult to *retain* such an impression amid the business, and pleasures, and entanglements of the world; but, so far as it has been retained, it has been uniformly the pledge of regularity in the conduct, peace in the mind, and an honourable character in society. — Thus much by way of introduction to the following chapter.

CHAP. XXXVII.

OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

CHRISTIANITY then only answers its end, when it is established as a paramount principle in the heart, purifying the desires and intentions, tranquillising the temper, enlarging the affections, and regulating the conduct. But, though this alone be its perfect work, it has subordinate operations, which are not only valuable for their direct results, but seem, in the order of Providence, to be preliminary to its more inward and spiritual efficacy.

When we observe how extensive is the outward profession of Christianity, and how obviously limited is a consistently Christian practice; the first emotion of a serious mind is naturally that of regret. But a more considerate view will give occasion to other feelings. It will be seen, that that outward profession of our holy religion which is secured by an establishment, is an inestimable blessing to a community; that the public benefits which result from it are beyond reckoning, besides the far greater utility of affording to each individual that light of information, and those means of religious worship, which, duly used, will ensure his eternal salvation.

That there should therefore be a *visible* as well as an *invisible* church, an instituted as well as a personal religion, and that the one should embrace

whole communities, while the other may extend to a comparative few, appears not only the natural consequence of Christianity, as a religious profession, spreading through society, and necessarily transmitted from father to son, but it seems also that kind of arrangement which Divine Wisdom would sanction, in order to the continuance of Christianity in the world.

Thus much would rational reflection dictate on a view of the case; but we are not left to our own mere reasonings. What in itself appears so probable, our Saviour has intimated to us, as an essential part of the divine plan, in several of his parables. What is the leaven hid in the three measures of meal, but real Christianity operating in those happy individuals whose hearts and lives are governed by its influence? And what again is the mass of meal with which the leaven is blended, but the great body of mankind, who, by God's gracious Providence, have been led to assume the Christian profession, and thus to constitute that visible church, whose mixed character is again shown in the subsequent parables of the net cast into the sea, as well as in that of the wheat and the tares.

If, then, the public profession of Christianity be thus explicitly sanctioned by the Divine Wisdom; if, also, our own daily experience shows it to be most beneficial to society, as well as obviously conducive to the inward and spiritual purposes of our religion; we must admit, that the establishment which evidently secures such profession, is

an object of inestimable value. It was necessary, in the order of nature, that what was to impregnate the world should be first itself prepared and proved. For three centuries, therefore, it pleased God to leave Christianity to make its way by its own mere strength, that by its superiority, both to the allurements and the menaces of the world, to all that could be desired, and to all that could be suffered by man, its true nature, and its genuine energy, might be for ever demonstrated; and its efficacy to assimilate, at length, the whole world to itself, be evinced, by its resistless growth, in circumstances the most apparently desperate.

During this period, therefore, such instruments alone were used as might serve to evince most clearly, that the "excellency of the power was of God, and not of men." But when the season had arrived when the intermixture was to be extensively promoted, then another and very different agency was resorted to; when the world was to be brought into the visible church, then the powers of the world received that impulse from the hand of Heaven, which made them, in a deeper sense than ever before, "ministers of God for good." Then, for the first time, kings and princes embraced the profession of Christianity, and enjoined it by laws and edicts, as well as by still better methods, on the great body of their subjects.

How far the national changes which then took place were voluntary or necessitated, there is no occasion for us to enquire. "The good which is

done upon the earth, God doeth it himself." And what good, next to the actual giving of the Gospel, has been greater than the providential blending of the leaven of Christianity with the great mass of human society? If the first generation of those nominal Christians were even pagans in their hearts, that did not lessen the greatness of the benefit to posterity. They passed away, and their paganism passed away along with them; and the light of Christianity, invaluable in its immediate, but infinitely more so in its ultimate consequences, became the entailed possession of these European nations, under the double guarantee of popular attachment and political power.

Such was the providential origin of religious establishments. Let those who object to them only keep in their view, that chain of events by which the Christian profession was made national in any country; let them also enquire the fate of Christianity in those countries where either no such establishments took place, or where they were overthrown by the ascendency of the Mahometan potentates. Lastly, let them reflect on the benefit and the comfort of that one single effect of "kings becoming nursing-fathers, and queens nursing-mothers," of the visible church, — *the legal enforcement of the Christian sabbath*, — and then see on what grounds, as friends to good order, as honest citizens, or as consistent Christians, they can oppose or condemn so essential and so effectual an instrument of the best blessings which human kind can enjoy.

If, then, the *national establishment* of Christianity, even under the most disadvantageous circumstances, became the source of invaluable benefits and blessings, what estimate ought to be formed of *that Christian establishment, in particular*, which, on the most impartial survey of all similar institutions which have been known in the Christian world, will be found the most admirably fitted for its purpose?

The established church of England may not, it is true, bear a comparison with theoretic perfection, nor will it gain the approbation of those who require that a visible should possess the qualities of an invisible church, and that every member of a national institution should equal in piety certain individual Christians; nor, in any point of view, can its real character be ascertained, or its just claims be established, except it be contemplated, as a *fixed institution*, existing from the period of the Reformation to the present day, independently of the variations and discordances of the successive multitudes who adhered to it.

Let it, then, under this only fair notion of it, be compared with all the other national churches of the Reformation, and, on such a comparative view, its superiority will be manifest. The truth is, our church occupies a kind of middle place; neither multiplying ceremonies, nor affecting pompousness of public worship with the Lutheran church, nor rejecting all ceremonies and all liturgical solemnity with the church of Geneva; — a temperament thus singular, adopted and adhered to in times of

unadvanced light and much polemical dissonance, amid jarring interests and political intrigues, conveys the idea of something more excellent than could have been expected from mere human wisdom.

A national establishment is ill fitted for its purpose, if it present nothing striking to the external senses or imagination. In order to answer its design, it ought at once to be so outwardly attractive, as to attach the great mass of professing Christians to its ordinances; and yet the substance of these ordinances should be so solid and rational, and so spiritual, as to be fitted to the farther and still more important purpose of infusing inward vital Christianity. These characters, we conceive, are exhibited in the Anglican church, in a degree unexampled in any other Christian establishment. She alone avoids all extremes. Though her worship be wisely popular, it is also deeply spiritual; though simple, it is sublime. She has rejected pompous ceremonies, but she has not therefore adopted an offensive negligence. In laying aside all that was ostentatious, she retained all that is solemn and affecting. Her reasonable service peculiarly exemplifies the Apostle's injunction of praying with the understanding as well as with the heart. To both these the chief attention is directed, while the imagination and the senses are by no means excluded from regard. It is our Saviour's exquisitely discriminating rule applied to another subject: — "These," says he (the weightier

matters), "ye ought to have *done*, and not to leave the others *undone*."

If these remarks had nothing but opinion to support them, a different opinion might no less fairly be opposed to them. But let a matter of fact question be asked: Which of the Protestant establishments has best answered its end?—In other words—In which of the Protestant countries in Europe have the fundamental truths of Scripture been most strictly adhered to, and the Christian religion most generally respected? If we enquire into the present circumstances of Protestant Europe, shall we not find that, in one class of churches on the Continent, the more learned of the clergy commonly become Socinians; while, among the clergy of the other, there appears a strange tendency towards absolute deism? Amongst the laity of both churches, French principles, it may be feared, have so much prevailed, as to become in a great measure their own punishment: for to what other cause but a departure from the faith of their fathers can we ascribe their having so totally lost the ardour and resolution which once distinguished their communities? Infidelity takes from the collective body its only sure cement, and from the individual his only certain source of courage. It leaves the mass of the people without *that* possession to be defended, in which all ranks and degrees are alike interested; and takes from the individual that *one* principle which alone can, at all times, raise a human being above his natural weaknesses, and make him superior both to pleasure

and pain. While religion was an object with the people alluded to, it inspired the lowest, as well as the highest, with a zeal to defend their country against invaders, who, if predominant, would have robbed them of their religious liberty; but now, concern for religion being too generally cooled, they prefer the most disgraceful ease to exertions which would necessarily demand self-denial, and might deprive them of that only existence for which infidels *can* be concerned.

Why is it otherwise in England? Why are not we also overspread with pernicious principles, and sunk in base pusillanimity? The Germans were once as brave, the Swiss once as religious as any of us; but bravery and religion seem, as far as we can learn, to have abandoned some of those countries together. In England, blessed be God! things present a very different aspect. We have indeed much to lament, and much, very much, to blame; but infidelity does not *triumph*, nor does patriotism decline. Why is it thus? Is it not because the temperament of the English establishment has left no room for passing from one extreme to another; because its public service is of that stirring excellence, which must ever be attractive to the impressible mind, edifying to the pious mind, unimpeachable by the severest reasoner, and awful even to the profligate?

For, in enumerating the merits of our admirable establishment, we must not rest in the superiority of her *forms*, excellent as they are, but must extend the praise, where it is so justly due, to the still

more important article of her doctrines. For, after all, it is her luminous exhibition of Christian truth that has been the grand spring and fountain of the good which she has produced. It is the spirituality of her worship, — it is the rich infusion of Scripture *, — it is the deep confessions of sin, — it is the earnest invocations of mercy, — it is the large enumeration of spiritual wants, and the abundant supply of correspondent blessings, with which her liturgy abounds, that are so happily calculated to give the tone of piety to her children.

In forming this invaluable liturgy, there was no arrogant self-conceit on the one hand, no relinqishment of strict judgment on the other. The errors of the Romish church were to be rejected, but the treasures of ancient piety which she possessed were not be abandoned. Her formularies contained devotional compositions, not more venerable for their antiquity than valuable for their intrinsic excellence; being at once simple and energetic, perspicuous and profound. What, then, was more suitable to the sober spirit of reformation, than to separate those precious remnants of ancient piety from their drossy accompaniments, — and, while these last were deservedly cast away, to mould the pure gold which remained into a new form, fitted at once to interest and to edify the public mind?

* Of the vast importance of this one circumstance, an early proof was given. "Cranmer," says the learned author of the Elements of Christian Theology, "found the people so improved by hearing the Epistles and Gospels, as to be brought to bear the alterations which he had provided."

It is worthy of observation, that in all reforms, whether civil or religious, wise and good men prove themselves to be such, by this infallible criterion, that THEY NEVER ALTER FOR THE SAKE OF ALTERING; but in their zeal to introduce improvements, are conscientiously careful to depart no further from established usages than strict duty and indispensable necessity require.

Instead, therefore, of its being any stigma on our church-service that it was collected from breviaries and missals, it adds substantially to its value. The identity of true Christian piety, in all ages, being hereby demonstrated, in a way as satisfactory to the judgment as it is interesting to the heart. In such a procedure, Christian liberty was united with Christian sobriety, primitive piety with honest policy. A whole community was to be attached to the new mode of worship, and, therefore, it was expedient to break their habits no more than Christian purity demanded. They only, however, who actually compare those of our prayers which are selected from Romish formularies with the originals, can form a just idea with what discriminative judgment the work was executed, and what rich improvements are often introduced into the English collects, so as to heighten the sentiment, yet without at all impairing the simplicity. Indeed, the wisdom and moderation of the founders of our church were equally conspicuous in the whole of their proceedings; never *strenuously* contending for any points, not even in that summary of Christian doc-

trines which was to be the established standard, but for such as affected the grand foundations of faith, hope, and charity.

How honourable to our reformers, and to the glorious work in which they so successfully laboured, that in the very first formation of the English church, that care to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials should be so strictly exercised, which the brightest philosophical luminary in his own or perhaps in any age, some years after, so strongly recommended, and so beautifully illustrated. "We see Moses," says Lord Bacon, "when he saw the Israelite and the Egyptian fight, he did not say, Why strive ye? but drew his sword and slew the Egyptian. But when he saw two Israelites fight, he said, You are *brethren*, why strive you? If the point of doctrine be an Egyptian, it must be slain by the sword of the spirit; but if it be an Israelite, though in the wrong, then, why strive you? We see of the fundamental points Christ penneth the league thus: — *he that is not against us is for us.*" * But of points not fundamental thus, — *he that is not against us is with us.*

To the eternal praise, then, of our reformers, as well as with the deepest gratitude to God, be it said, that, in their concern for matters of faith, in which concern they yielded to none of their contemporaries, they intermingled a charity in which they have excelled them all. And, in consequence of this radical and truly Christian liberality, a

* Lord Bacon on the Advancement of Learning, book ii.

noble spirit of tolerance has ever been the characteristic of genuine church of England divines: of those, I mean, who have cordially agreed with the first reformers, and wished no deviation from their principles, either in doctrine or in worship; desiring neither to add to, nor diminish, the comely order which *they* had established in the public service; nor to be dogmatical where *they* had been enlarged; nor relaxed where *they* had been explicit: — yet ready at all times to indulge the prejudices of their weaker brethren, and to grant to others that freedom of thought, of which, in their own case, they so fully understood the value. Our first reformers were men of eminent piety, and happily for the interests of genuine religion, far less engaged in controversy than the divines of the Continent. Even those of their own nation, who differed from them in lesser points, and with whom they *did* debate, were men of piety also, and entirely agreed with them in doctrines. Hence, the strain of preaching, in our church of England divines, became less polemical, and more pious and practical, than that of the clergy of other churches. To this end the Book of Homilies was highly conducive, being an excellent model, which served to give the example of useful and practical preaching. In this most important particular, and in that of deep and conclusive reasoning, we may assign the decided superiority to English divines, above all those of the Continent, though the latter may, perhaps, in some instances, dispute with them the palm of eloquence.

From divines of the above character, happily never wanting in any age, our national establishment has ever derived its best strength at home, and its honour and credit in foreign countries. These have made the Anglican church looked up to by all the churches of the Reformation. Their learning has been respected, their wisdom has been esteemed, their liberality has been loved and honoured, their piety has been revered, by all of every Protestant communion who were capable of discerning and approving excellence; nay, even in the Romish communion, they have sometimes excited a degree of estimation, which nothing could have called forth but the most indisputable superiority.

But it is not only in the clerical order that the kindly influences of the English establishment have been manifest; they appear in the brighest point of view in those illustrious laymen, whose labours have contributed not less to raise the British name than the achievements, unexampled as they have been, of our armies or our navies. On account of these men, we have been termed by foreigners a nation of philosophers; and, for the sake of their writings, English has become, not so much a fashionable as, what is far more honourable, a kind of learned language in almost every country of Europe. Yet in no writers upon earth has a sense of religion been more evidently the very key-stone of their excellence. This it is which gives them that sobriety of mind, that intellectual conscientiousness, that penetrating pur-

suit, not of subtilty but of truth, that decorous dignity of language, that cordiality, as well as sublimity of moral sentiment and expression, which have procured for them not merely the suffrage of the understanding but the tribute of the heart.

And let it be attentively enquired, how they came by this rare qualification? how it happened that in them, so much more strikingly than in the learned and philosophical of perhaps any other nation, increase of knowledge did not generate scepticism, nor the consciousness of their mental strength inspire them with contempt for the religion of their country? Was it not, that that religion was so modified, as equally to endear itself to the vivid sensibility of youth, the quick intelligence of manhood, the matured reflection of age and wisdom? That it did not, on the one hand, conceal the beauty and weaken the strength of vital truth, by cumbrous and unnecessary adjuncts; — nor, on the other hand, withhold from it that graceful drapery, without which, in almost all instances, the imagination, as it were, instinctively, refuses to perform its appropriate function of conveying truth to the heart? And, further, have not the above invaluable effects been owing to this also, that the inherent spirit of Christian tolerance, which has been described as distinguishing our communion from every other national communion in the world, by allowing to their minds every just claim, has taken the best possible method of preventing intellectual licentiousness? In fine, to what other causes than those just stated can

we ascribe it, that this country, above all others, has been the seat of philosophy, unbounded in its researches, yet modest in its assumptions, and temperate in its conclusions? Of literary knowledge, not only patiently pursued, and profoundly explored, but wisely digested, and usefully applied? Of religion, in its most rational, most influential, most Christian shape and character; — not the dreary labour of superstition, not the wild delirium of fanaticism, but the infallible guide of reason, the invincible guard of virtue, the enjoyment of present peace, and the assurance of future happiness?

But, whatever providential causes have hitherto contributed among us to restrain infidelity and profaneness, have we no reason to fear, that their operations are growing less and less powerful? And should we not bear in mind, that it is not the *form* of our church-establishment, incomparable as that is, which can alone arrest the progress of danger, if there should arise any declension of zeal in supporting its best interests, if ever there should be found any lack of knowledge for zeal to work with. The character also of the reigning prince will always have a powerful effect either in retarding or accelerating the evil.

One of our most able writers on history and civil society*, is perpetually inculcating, that no political constitution, no laws, no provision made by former ages, can ever secure the actual enjoyment of political happiness and liberty, if there

* Ferguson.

be not a zeal among the living for the furtherance of these objects. Laws will be misconstrued and fall into oblivion, and ancient maxims will be superseded, if the attention of the existing generation be not alive to the subject.

Surely it may be said at least with equal truth, that no excellence of our religious establishment, no orthodoxy in our articles, no, nor even that liturgy on whose excellences we have delighted to expatiate, can secure the maintenance of true religion, but in proportion as the religious spirit is maintained in our clergy; in proportion as it is diffused among the people; in proportion as it is encouraged from the throne.

If such, then, be the value, and such the results of the English ecclesiastical establishment, how high is the destiny of that personage, whom the laws of England recognise as its supreme head on earth! How important is it, that the prince, charged with such an unexampled trust, should feel its weight, should understand its grand peculiarities, and be habitually impressed with his own unparalleled responsibility! To misemploy, in any instance, the prerogative which this trust conveys, is to lessen the stability, and counteract the usefulness of the fairest and most beneficial of all the visible fabrics erected in this lower world. But what an account would that prince or that minister have to render, who should *systematically* debase this little less than divine institution, by deliberately consulting not how the Church of England may be kept high in public opinion, influential on public

morals, venerable through the meek yet manly wisdom, the unaffected yet unblemished purity, the energetic yet liberal zeal of its clergy; — but, how it may be made subservient to the trivial and temporary interests of the prevalent party, and the passing hour?

Besides the distribution of dignities, and the great indirect influence which this affords the Prince, in the disposal of a vast body of preferment; his wisdom and tenderness of conscience will be manifested also in the appointment of the chancellor, whose church patronage is immense. And in the discharge of that most important trust, the appointment of the highest dignitaries, the monarch will not forget that his responsibility is proportionably the more awful, because the exercise of his power is less likely to be controlled, and his judgment to be thwarted, than may often happen in the case of his political servants.

Nor will it, it is presumed, be deemed impertinent to remark, that the just administration of this peculiar power may be reasonably expected as much, we had almost said even more, from a female, than from a monarch of the other sex. The bishops chosen by those three judicious queens, Elizabeth, Mary, and Caroline, were generally remarkable for their piety and learning. And let not the writer be suspected of flattering either the Queen or the Bishop by observing, that among the wisdom and abilities which now adorn the bench, a living prelate, high in dignity, in talents, and in Christian virtues, is said to have

temple, cannot reasonably be hoped for, when we turn into the lateral recesses.

There are instances, however, in which God's providential works shine so clearly "by their own radiant light," as to demonstrate the hand which fashioned, and the skill which arranged them. And though others are of a more doubtful nature, yet, when the attainments of any one particular nation become matter of general influence, so that what was, at first, the fruit of merely local labour, or the effect of a peculiar combination of local circumstances, becomes from its obvious utility or intrinsic excellence an object to other surrounding countries, and grows at length into an universal benefit;—in such a distinction, we can hardly forbear to trace something so like a consistent plan of operations, that the duty of observing and acknowledging it seems incumbent on such communities as appear to have been thus signally favoured. What advantage, for instance, has the whole civilised world derived from the philosophising turn of the ancient Greeks? How widely extensive, and how durable has been its influence!

Of what importance are the benefits which the politic spirit of the Roman empire diffused among the countries of Europe, most of which, to this day, acknowledge the hand which reared them from barbarism, by still retaining those laws which that hand transcribed for them, as if Rome were allowed to do that for men's circumstances which Greece was permitted to effect for their minds!

But a third instance is encumbered with less difficulty, — the designation of Judea to be the local source of true religion. In this small province of the Roman empire, what a scene was transacted, and from those transactions, what a series of consequences have followed, and what a system of influences has been derived, operating, and still to operate on individuals, — communities, — nations, in ways, and with effects, the happiest or the most awful, as they are embraced or rejected, and leading to results, not to be calculated even as to this world, — but wholly inconceivable, as to that future world, where all the deep purposes of God are to have their perfect consummation!

But, if such has been the method of Providence in those great designs, which have heretofore been carried on in the world, can we suppose that the same plan is not substantially pursued in his present arrangements? Are not blessings still to be conferred on society? Blessings, yet in general unknown, and greater measures of those which are already in part attained? — How rare, for example, has been hitherto the blessing of complete civil government — of such a political system as combines the apparent contrarieties of of public security with personal liberty! An object aimed at by the wisest legislators of earlier times, but regarded by them as a beautiful theory, incapable of being realised! Still more — How limited is the attainment of religious truth, — *of well-weighed, well-digested religious belief*, — and of

well-conceived, well-regulated divine worship! Christianity exists in the Scripture, like virgin gold in the mine; but how few, comparatively, have been able to extract it without loss, or to bring it into public circulation without deplorable alloy! How erroneous, in most instances, are those modes and exercises of it which are adopted by states and governments; and how seldom does it seem rightly apprehended, even by the most enlightened individuals! To suppose things will always remain in this state is little short of an imputation on Divine Wisdom. But, in the mean time, how disastrous are the consequences to individuals and to society!

If there be, then, a country, long and signally distinguished in both these important instances; — in the former, so as to have been the object of universal admiration; — in the latter, so as to have been looked up to by all the most enlightened parts of the Christian world: — if there be such a country, can we help regarding its superiority to other countries as the result of a providential destination, as clear as that which allotted philosophy to ancient Greece, and civil polity to ancient Rome? — and may it not even be added, as really divine, though not miraculous, as that which gave true religion to ancient Judea?

If England be this community, if England be the single nation upon earth, — where that checked and balanced government, — that temperament of monarchic, aristocratic, and popular rule, which philosophic statesmen, in ancient times, admired

so much in theory, — has been actually realised: — if it be also distinguished by a temperament in religious concerns little less peculiar, — is not every thinking member of such a community bound to acknowledge, with deepest gratitude, so extraordinary a distinction? And what employment of thought can be more interesting than to trace the providential means by which such unexampled benefits and blessings have been conferred upon our country?

To enter at large into so vast a subject, would be an impracticable attempt, on such an occasion as the present. It would itself furnish materials for a volume rather than for a few pages *; and to treat it with justice would be a task to which the best informed and profoundest mind would alone be competent. A few scattered observations, therefore, are all that we can pretend to offer, not, however, without hope, that they will excite to a deeper and more extended investigation. We are told by Saint Paul, that "he who made of one blood all nations, fixed not only the time before appointed (the epochs of their rise and fall), but

* The train of thought pursued in this and the following chapter, as well as some of the thoughts themselves, both here and in one or two former passages, may, perhaps, be recognised by the Rev. and learned Doctor Miller, late fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, as akin to those views of providential history which he has given in a course of lectures in that college. The author gladly acknowledges having received, through a friend, a few valuable hints from this source, of which it is earnestly hoped the public may in due time be put in full possession.

also the bounds of their habitation." The result of this creative arrangement, respecting the greater divisions of the earth, Europe, Asia, and Africa, separated, yet connected, by that inland ocean the Mediterranean Sea, have been already noticed. But nothing has been more pregnant in its consequences in this general plan than the insulated situation of Great Britain, with respect to our national circumstances. If we are at this day free, while so many neighbouring nations are enslaved; — if we stand erect, while they are trampled on, — let us not entirely attribute it to any superiority in ourselves, of spirit, of wisdom, or strength; but let us also humbly and gratefully ascribe it to that appointment of the Creator, which divided us from the continent of Europe. Had we been as accessible to the arms of France as Holland, Swisserland, or the Austrian Netherlands, we might, perhaps, have been involved in the same calamities. But we cannot stop here. The entire series of our history, as a nation, seems in a great measure to have been derived from this source; and every link in the chain of our fortune bears some significant mark of our local peculiarity. Without this, where would have been our commercial opulence or our maritime power? If we had not been distinct as a country, we had not been distinct as a people. We might have imbibed the taints, been moulded by the manners, and immerged in the greatness of our more powerful neighbours. It was that goodness which made us an island, that laid the

foundation of our national happiness. It was by placing us in the midst of the waters that the Almighty prepared our country for those providential uses to which it has served, and is yet to serve in the great scheme of his dispensations. Thus, then, we behold ourselves raised as a nation above all the nations of the earth by that very circumstance which made our country be regarded, two thousand years ago, only as a receptacle for the refuse of the Roman empire.

To this, evidently, it has been owing, that, amongst us, the progress of society, from barbarism to high improvement, has not only been more regular, but more radical and entire, as to all the portions and circumstances of the body politic, than in any instance with which we are acquainted. Shut in from those desolating blasts of war which have ever and anon been sweeping the Continent, the culture of our moral soil has been less impeded, and the seeds which have been sown have yielded ampler as well as maturer harvests. We have had our vicissitudes, — but in a manner peculiar to ourselves. They seem clearly providential, and not fortuitous; since it is certain that the agitations which we have experienced, and the apparent calamities which we have suffered, have been, in almost every instance, signally conducive to our advancement. When England became possessed by the Saxons, she appeared only to be sharing the fate of the other European countries; all of which about that period, or soon after, became the prey of similar hordes of in-

vaders. But a difference of result, in our particular instance, arising chiefly from our insular situation, after some time, presents itself to us, as already marking that happy destination with which Providence intended to favour us.

It has been observed by historians, that when an army of those northern invaders took possession of any country, they formed their establishment with a view to self-defence, much more than to civil improvement. They knew not how suddenly they might be attacked by some successful army of adventurers; and therefore, says Dr. Robertson, "a feudal kingdom resembled a military establishment, rather than a civil institution." — "Such a policy," adds the same historian, "was well calculated for defence, against the assaults of any foreign power; but its provisions for the interior order and tranquillity of society were extremely defective; the principles of disorder and corruption being discernible in that constitution under its best and most perfect form."*

To this "feudal system," however, the newly established potentates of the Continent seem to have been impelled by necessity; but an inevitable consequence was, that that taste for liberty, which had animated their followers in their native forests, could no longer be cherished, and was of course doomed to extinction.

In Britain alone such a necessity did not exist. The possession of the country being once accom-

* Robertson's View of the State of Europe, prefixed to Charles V. sect. 1.

plished, its tenure was comparatively secured by the surrounding ocean. Defence was not to be neglected; but danger was not imminent. Thus no new habit was *forced* on the new settlers, so as to expel their original propensities; and accordingly, whatever means of safety they might have resorted to, against each other, during the multiplicity of these governments, we see, at the distance of four centuries, Alfred turning from successful warfare against invaders to exercise that consummate wisdom with which his mind was enriched, in systematising those very aboriginal principles of Saxon liberty. A civil polity was thus erected, which was not only in its day the most perfect scheme of government that had yet existed, but it also was formed of such materials, and established on such a solid foundation, as never after to be wholly demolished; until, at length, it has been gradually wrought into that magnificent fabric, which, through the blessing of Heaven, is at this day the glory and the defence of our island.

In these rudiments, then, of the English constitution, let us gratefully recognise the first most striking indication of a particular Providence presiding over our country. A genius, the first of his age, is raised in a remote and insulated part of Europe, — where, at first view, it might be thought, his talents must be destitute of their proper sphere of action. But in what other European country could his enlarged views have been in any adequate degree realised? — Where the feudal government was established, such wise and liberal arrangements

as those of Alfred were necessarily precluded; at least they could not have been introduced, without stripping such a government of its essential characters; Alfred's system being as strictly *civil*, as the other was *military*. He provided sufficiently for external safety, but it was internal security and tranquillity to which his exquisite policy was peculiarly directed. And from its correspondence with right reason, with the native spirit of the people, and with the local circumstances of the country, it so rooted itself in the English soil, as to out-live all the storms of civil discord, as well as the long winter of the Norman tyranny.

Is it not, then, remarkable, that, when such a concurrence of favourable circumstances existed, in that very sequestered spot should arise an individual, so precisely fitted to turn them to what appears their allotted purpose? Had there not been an Alfred to accomplish the work, all these capabilities might soon have vanished, and our national happiness never have been realised. — On the other hand, had Alfred lived without his appropriate sphere of action, he would no doubt have been a successful warrior, a gracious prince, and clearly, as far as the state of men's minds admitted, a friend to letters, and such rude arts as were then in use; but he would not have been venerated, at the distance of a thousand years, as the founder of the best scheme of laws, and the happiest system of government, that the world ever saw. Such a correspondence, then, of so distinguished an agent to so apt a sphere of action, and attended with re-

sults so permanent, so beneficial, and so widely influential on human society, was surely far above fortuitous coincidence. Was it not, on the contrary, an adaptation so self-evident, as can only be ascribed to the special interference of over-ruling Providence?

It is true, that, by the Norman conquest, the benefits derived from this wise and happy establishment appeared for the time overwhelmed by a threefold tyranny, — regal, feudal, and ecclesiastical. But this, on an attentive view, will appear no less to have been over-ruled for good. To repress for the purpose of excitement, and to employ gross admixtures, in order to higher purification, are procedures congruous with all the laws of nature.

In a constitution formed in so dark an age, and adapted to so rude a people, there could be little more than the crude elements of such a political system, as more advanced times would require. Yet had the enjoyment of those earlier privileges remained undisturbed, nothing better might have been aimed at; and instead of that progressive advance, with which we have been blessed, our nation might, at this day, have only been distinguished by a blind and stupid attachment to some obsolete forms of liberty, from which all substantial worth had long since departed. For the prevention of such an evil, human foresight could make no provision; and we may now look back with wonder, on the wisdom, as well as efficacy, of the process. The original plan was guarded by the same gracious

hand, until the habits induced by it were fixed in the minds of Englishmen;—then it was suspended, that they might struggle to regain it; and by the activity thus excited, and more and more elicited by new competitions, they might at length attain to the highest civil and political happiness, which has been enjoyed in this imperfect state of being.

But, on a yet more enlarged view of our national progress, shall we not be led to conclude, that something more than the improvement of our political constitution was in the design of Providence, when the Norman dynasty became possessed of the throne? A far more important reformation, than that of human laws, or political systems, was at length to take place. And in this great ecclesiastical revolution, England was intended to act a conspicuous part. For this, even these preparatory steps would be necessary. And may we not clearly trace such steps from the epoch of which we are speaking? The encroachments of the papal see had, till then, been comparatively little felt in England. But the Norman princes introduced foreign bishops, who exercised in the church as galling a dominion, as that of their royal patrons in the state. "The consciences of men," says Sir William Blackstone, "were enslaved by sour ecclesiastics, devoted to a foreign power, and unconnected with the civil state under which they lived; who now imported from Rome, for the first time, the whole farrago of superstitious novelties, which had been engendered by the blindness and corruption of the

times, between the first mission of Augustine the monk, and the Norman conquest." *

Had these pernicious practices been *gradually* and *insensibly* introduced, as they were in most countries on the Continent, they would have been inevitably combined with the common habits of the people. But being thus suddenly and forcibly imposed, in conjunction, too, with such a mass of political grievances, their almost necessary tendency was to excite a spirit of resistance. We accordingly find, that in every advance which was made towards regaining a free government, a conquest was gained over some instance of ecclesiastical as well as of political tyranny; than which, what more effectual course could the most sagacious foresight have pursued, for rousing the national mind from the dead drowsiness of superstition, and preparing it to give a cordial reception to that light of religious truth, which, when the proper season should arrive, was to beam forth with peculiar brightness on this favoured country.

But it is not only in its encroachments and severities that we are to regard the Norman government as an instrument of Providence. It doubtless was the means of much direct and positive good. The minds of Englishmen needed improvement, still more than their civil constitution. Alfred had attempted to sow the seeds of learning, as well as of jurisprudence, amongst his countrymen; but to inspire a barbarous people with a love of literature, was what neither he nor his

* Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. iv. last chap.

master, Charlemagne, was able in any great degree to accomplish. An advance of general civilisation was necessary to strike out such a disposition; and it was not until towards the beginning of the 12th century, that any part of Western Europe appeared to have been visited with the dawn of an intellectual day. A connection, therefore, with the Continent, previously to that period, could not have served the moral, and might have injured the political interests of our island. But that it should, just at that time, be brought into such circumstances as should ensure its participation in all the mental acquirements of the neighbouring countries, appears evidently to bespeak the same superintendence as in the instances already noticed.

It is, however, in the great event of the English Reformation, that we perceive, as has been already observed *, the most striking marks of Divine direction; and it seems to discover to us why it has pleased God to distinguish us by so many previous instances of favour. We were not only to be blessed with the light of truth ourselves, but we were to be, in some sort, "a city set upon a hill." The peculiar temperament of the English Protestant establishment, which places it in a kind of middle line between the churches of the Continent, has been also noticed in a former chapter. But is it not evident, that our national church, humanly speaking, derived that temperament from a previously-formed national character? "The English," says Voltaire, "into whom Nature has

* Chap. xxxv.

infused a spirit of independence, adopted the opinions of the reformers, but mitigated them, and composed from them a religion peculiar to themselves." * It is seldom that, on such a subject, this acute but most perverted pen has so justly described the fact. But what a striking testimony is this, not only to the worth of that national character, which thus distinguished itself from the whole Christian world, but also to the depth of that Divine wisdom, which made so many remote and unconnected contingences work together in producing so valuable a result!

In establishing a religion which is founded on truth, and which consists essentially in the love of God and man, what more suitable dispositions could there be provided than an *independent spirit* and a *mitigating temper?* That both these were eminently exemplified by our venerable reformers, need not here be proved. Nor is it necessary to enlarge upon the obvious tendency of the English laws and constitution, to form such dispositions in those who lived within their influence. If this tendency were doubtful, a striking fact in after-times might serve to illustrate it; I mean that steady zeal with which all the great constitutional lawyers, during the agitations of the seventeenth century, endeavoured to preserve to the English church establishment that very temperament which had so happily entered into its first formation. Nor can we pass over the care which was taken, in the very occurrences of the Reformation, for

* Siècle de Louis XIV. chap. xxxii.

adapting it to the *independent spirit* of the English, and also for perpetuating, in the establishment itself, that *mild and mitigating temper* which had influenced its first founders.

It was indispensable that the change in the church establishment should be accomplished by the paramount powers of the state, they alone being either legally or naturally competent. But no act of a king or council, or even of a parliament, was adequate to effect in the minds of the English public that rational and cordial acquiescence in the new state of things, without which it must have been inefficient as to influence, and insecure as to duration.

But for this, Providence itself made admirable provision. The pious and amiable Edward was kept upon the throne until all that was necessary to be done, in an external and political way, had been effected. Then, for a time, the old system was permitted to return, with all its horrible accompaniments, in order, as it should seem, that the Protestant church of England might not rest upon human laws *alone*, but might appear to have originated in the same essential principles with those of the apostolic church, and to have been constituted by men of a like spirit, who, when called to it, were similarly prepared to seal their testimony with their blood.

The service that these illustrious men had done, by their temperate wisdom and admirable judgment, in the reign of Edward, in compiling such a liturgy, and establishing such a worship and such

a form of doctrine, is ever to be had in grateful remembrance. But their passive virtue, their primitive heroism, in patiently, and even joyfully, dying for those truths which they had conscientiously adopted; this it was which established Protestantism in the hearts of the English populace. They saw the infernal cruelty of the Popish leaders, and the calm magnanimity of the Protestant martyrs; they saw these holy men, whose connection with secular politics might be thought to have corrupted them, and whose high station in society might be supposed to have enervated them, facing death in its most dreadful form, with more than human tranquillity. They saw all this, and the impression made upon them was like that which was made on the Israelites at Mount Carmel, by the event of the memorable contest between the priests of Baal and the prophets of the Lord. Accordingly, on the death of Mary, the accession of Elizabeth excited universal joy. The acquiescence of the people in the changes made by Henry, and even by Edward, were little more than acts of necessity, and therefore implied no revolution in the general opinion. But *now* it was evinced, by every possible proof, that a thorough detestation of Popery had extended itself through the whole community. "Were we to adopt," says Goldsmith, "the maxim of the Catholics, that evil may be done for the production of good, one might say, that the persecutions in Mary's reign were permitted only to bring the kingdom over to the Protestant religion. The people had

formerly been compelled to embrace it, and their fears induced them to conform, but now almost the whole nation were Protestants from inclination." Nothing can surely be more just than the substance of this sentiment. The lively writer seems only to have forgotten, that we may ascribe to Divine Providence the permission of evil in order to greater good, without sanctioning any maxim, revolting in theory, or dangerous in practice.

CHAP. XXXIX.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. — TOLERANT SPIRIT OF THE CHURCH. — CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED TO THE REVOLUTION — AND TO THE PROVIDENTIAL SUCCESSION OF THE HOUSE OF HANOVER.

THE circumstance attending the Reformation which has been most regretted was, that a portion of the Protestants were dissatisfied with it, as not coming up to the extent of their ideas; and that this laid the foundation of a system of dissent, which broke the uniformity of public worship, and led, at length, to a temporary overthrow both of the ecclesiastical and civil constitution.

On these events, as human transactions, our subject does not lead us to enlarge. If the above remarks, with those in a foregoing chapter, on the peculiar characters of the English establishment, be just, these persons, however conscientious, were opposing, without being aware of it, an institution which, from its excellent tendency and effects, seems to have been sanctioned by Providence. But may not even their opposition and subsequent dissent be considered in the same light as those other transactions which have been mentioned; that is, as permitted by the all-wise Disposer, in order to beneficial results, which could not in the nature of things, according to our conception, have been equally produced through any other

instrumentality? For example; did it not supply the aptest means which we can conceive for answering the important purpose which was mentioned above —*the perpetuating in the establishment itself that mild and mitigating temper which had so signally influenced its first founders?*

If Christian virtue be, in every instance, the result and the reward of conflict, and if each virtue be formed, as it were, out of the ruins of the opposite vice, then may we not deem it morally certain that a Christian community, which God "delighted to honour," should, as well as individuals, have an opportunity suitable to its circumstances, of not being "overcome of evil," but "of overcoming evil with good?" And would it not, therefore, appear probable that, though it should possess that political strength, and that portion of outward dignity, which might be necessary to its efficiency as a national establishment, it should also have some opposition to encounter, some trials to sustain, some calumnies to surmount, some injuries to forgive? Would not such circumstances strengthen its claim to being deemed an integral part of the church militant? and would they not fit it for answering all the purposes of a Christian establishment, far better than if it had possessed that exclusive ascendency, which should leave no room for the exercise of passive, and almost supersede the necessity even of active, virtue?

That the schism, of which we speak, was permitted by Providence for some such purpose as that just described, appears probable from the

agreement of such an intention with that wise and temperate plan by which the Reformation had been effected; from the obvious consistency of providing for the continuance of that moderate and mitigating temper of the first reformers; and, above all, because it is evident that the event in question has actually answered this valuable purpose; the most eminent divines of our church having been generally as much distinguished for candour towards those who differed from them, as for ability and firmness in maintaining their own more enlarged mode of conduct.

That they could not have so fully manifested these amiable and truly Christian qualities, in a state of things where there was nothing to call them forth, is self-evident; and it is almost as certain that even their possession of such virtues must depend upon their having had motives to exercise them. We accordingly perceive, in the lives and writings of the great luminaries of our church, not only a happy prevalence of liberal principles and charitable feelings, but also the very process, if we may so speak, by which these principles and feelings were formed. From having continually in their view a set of persons who had *substantially* the same faith, yet differed in modes of worship, we see them acquiring a peculiar habit of distinguishing between the essentials and circumstantials of religion. Their judgment becomes strong, as their charity becomes enlarged; and, above all other divines, perhaps, they investigate religion as philosophers, without injury to the

humility of their faith, or the fervency of their devotion. In almost every other communion (though with some admirable exceptions) deep contemplative piety often appears associated with some sentiment or practice, which is apt to abate our estimation of the rationality of the party; or, if rationality be preserved, there is too often some diminution of the pious affections. And what proves that, from the seeming evil of which we have spoken, God has by his over-ruling influence deduced this good, is, that the completest spirit of toleration, and this high description of character, have not only been commonly united, but that seasons which peculiarly called forth in churchmen the exercise of Christian forbearance were also singularly fruitful in examples of this sublime and philosophic piety. *

In fact, whether we consider the circumstances under which the church of England was formed, the language in which she expresses her sense of the Christian doctrines, the spirit which pervades all her formularies, or the temper which has distinguished the first founders, and all their genuine successors, she evidently appears designed by Eternal Wisdom to have been a tolerant church; and, by being such, to be the means of serving the great cause of Christianity, in certain important instances, which could only be accomplished in a state of *religious liberty.* In too many other Christian countries, the established religion has appeared to rest *entirely* upon a political found-

* See Bishop Burnet's History of his own Times.

ation. In consequence of this, men of lively talents have too generally, in such countries, become infidels. In England, the tolerant nature of the church establishment, in honourably maintaining and giving the highest reverence to a national form of worship, but allowing individuals their unrestrained choice, has left religion itself to be a matter of reason and conviction, as really as it was in the primitive times; and the consequence has been, that reason and conviction have signally done their part. Infidels have made their utmost efforts, with every aid that perverted talent and misapplied learning could give to them; but all they could accomplish has been to call forth far more powerful minds to defeat them with their own weapons; and to demonstrate, that though the divine religion of the Gospel leans on political support, for the sake of greater public utility, yet its appropriate strength is that of *invariable reason*, *irrefragable truth*, and *self-evident excellence*.

And while the English establishment has thus served the general interests of religion, she has also most substantially served herself. Making her appeal to reason, she has been estimated accordingly; and what she has not endeavoured to extort by force, has been greatly yielded to her from rational attachment. It was natural that the toleration which was given should, in so exclusive a community, be largely made use of. But this leaves room for the establishment to try its comparative fitness to attach more minds, in which, be it said without invidiousness, the result has at

all times been such, as signally to strengthen whatever has been adduced to illustrate the high providential uses of the established church of England.

Still, however, as the natural and proper tendency of the very best things may be thwarted by opposite influences, we ought to be aware, that the genuine tendency of the establishment to attach men's minds, and recommend itself by its own excellence, should not be trusted in so confidentially, as that any of those to whom this precious deposit is committed should, from an idea that its influence cannot be weakened, become supine, while its enemies are alive and active. We do not mean, that they should oppose the adversaries of the church by acrimonious controversy, but by the more appropriate weapons of activity and diligence. We may reasonably presume, that the Almighty, having wrought such a work for us at the Reformation, will still continue his blessing, while the same means are employed to maintain which were used to establish it. But to this end every aid should be resorted to, every method should be devised, by which the great mass of the people may be brought to the public worship of the church. To one most important means we have already adverted *, — and it cannot be too much insisted on, — that the lower classes, among which the defection is greatest, should betimes receive an impression on their minds, not only of God's goodness and mercy, but of his *power* and *supre-*

* Chap. xviii.

macy; and also, that God is the real original authority by which "kings reign, and princes decree justice;" by which obedience and loyalty to government are enforced, and all the subordinate duties of life required of them. It is from the pulpit, undoubtedly, that every duty, both to God and man, is best inculcated, and with a power and sanction peculiar to itself; and it is the clergy that must prepare for God faithful servants and true worshippers, and for the king a willing and obedient people.

But the clergy, however zealous, pious, and active, cannot find time to do all that might be done. A people might be prepared for the clergy themselves. The minds of children should be *universally* familiarised with the moving stories, and their affections excited by the amiable characters in the Bible. When the beautiful allegories of the New Testament have been not only studied but properly interpreted to them, — when their memories have been stored with such subjects and passages as constantly occur in preaching, — the service of the church, by becoming more intelligible, will become more attractive. And, as we have already observed, with their religious instructions there should be mixed a constant sense of the excellence of their *own church*, the privileges of belonging to it, the mischief of departing from it, the duties which lie upon them as members of it. They should be taught the nature of the government of this church, the authority from which it is derived, and their duty and obligations,

not as children only, but through life, to its ministers. They should be taught what all the offices and institutions of the church mean; that none of them are empty ceremonies, but arrangements of genuine wisdom, and to be valued and used accordingly.

We will venture to say, that were such a mode of training the lower classes *every where* adopted, they would then, not *occasionally*, fall in with the stream on Sundays, and be mixed, they know not why, with a congregation of customary worshippers; but they would come with ability to understand, and dispositions to prefer the established mode of worship; their ideas and sentiments would readily mix and assimilate with what they saw and heard. And thus an habitual veneration, both for the church and its pastors, would be an additional preparation for the gradual influence of real religion on their minds. But while these modes of instruction may be maintained by the leisure and the liberality of the laity, the clergy must be the life, and soul, and spirit of them.

But to return. — Perhaps in a fair view of the importance of that truly Christian liberty, which ever since the Revolution of 1688 has been established in England, it might be doubted whether this was not the ultimate object, on account of which the civil rights of the English community were so providentially fostered. Certain it is, that at every period of our history, when an advance is made in civil matters, some step appears generally to have been gained in ecclesiastical

concerns also; and the completion of the one is equally that of the other. But it seems as if the distinct agency of Providence, in bringing our church to that avowed and established tolerance, which was alike congenial to its spirit, and necessary to its purpose, is even more remarkable than that series of interpositions which has been referred to in the civil history of the country. And let it not be forgotten, that the toleration of our church is connected with our national love of civil liberty, and that the state also is tolerant.*

The long reign of Queen Elizabeth seems to have been designed for the purpose of consolidating and perpetuating the great work which had been accomplished. During that period, all the energies of the prerogative were exercised for the exclusive maintenance of the established religion. And may we not believe, that this was necessary till the new order of things should have established itself in the habits of the people?

That neither civil nor religious liberty was fully enjoyed in England till the Revolution, will not be denied. And that the weak and sometimes most erroneous conduct of the race of Stuart was providentially over-ruled, so as to lead to that glorious consummation, is equally obvious. May we not, then, suppose, that this family was brought upon the throne for this purpose, when we see, that when that object was ripe for accomplishment,

* It is to be lamented that there was a most unhappy instance of departure from this spirit in the reign of Charles II.

the family, in its male line, was excluded from the sovereignty, on the clearest grounds of invincible necessity, and hopeless bigotry; an event, the occasion for which was as much to be deplored, as its motives are to be revered, and its consequences to be gloried in. This Revolution was one of those rare and critical cases, which can never be pleaded as a precedent by discontent or disaffection. It was a singular instance when a high duty was of necessity superseded by a higher; and when the paramount rights of law and conscience united in urging the painful but irresistible necessity.

God has made human society progressive by the laws of nature, as well as by the order of his Providence. At some periods, this progress seems accelerated. It is, doubtless, the wisdom of those who preside over communities to mark all such periods, and instead of *resisting*, to *regulate* the progress. This did not the unfortunate house of Stuart. Their political errors shall not here be enumerated. Probably they would have been preserved from them, if they had not fought against Divine Providence, in several instances. The spirit of the English reformation was that of rational but strict piety. This strictness, the conduct both of James and even of the first Charles, had a tendency to extinguish, by sanctioning, and, in a degree, enjoining the profanation of the Lord's day. The order of public worship, as established by the reformers, was sufficiently majestic; no decorous circumstance being wanting,

no exceptionable ceremonies being admitted. Instead of wisely and steadily guarding this admirable arrangement from encroachments, the unfortunate Charles endeavoured to bring back these genuflexions and other ceremonies, which the first reformers had discarded; and enforced these innovations by a severity still more abhorrent from the temper of the Anglican church. Under such mismanagement, those dissentient principles, which existed since the Reformation, were fanned into that furious flame, from which the English constitution in church and state seems to have come forth unhurt, only because the designs of overruling Providence required their preservation.

The second Charles, untaught by the calamities of his virtuous but misguided father, disregarded all principle in his public, and outraged all decency in his private, conduct. His reign was a continual rebellion against that Providence which had destined the English nation to exemplify both good government and good morals, to the surrounding world. Perhaps, however, nothing short of the enormities of himself, and the misconduct of his successor, could have been sufficient to impel the English, after the miseries they had so lately experienced from anarchy, to the vindication of their just constitutional rights. And probably, again, they would not have possessed that temper, which kept them from demanding *more* than their just rights, if they had not received that previous discipline from the hand of Heaven. It is worthy of notice, that when the house of Stuart was dis-

possessed of the throne of England, that same Providence caused a respite in favour of those two * princesses who had not participated in the vices of their father's house. Of these, the elder was made a chief instrument in the great work which was to be accomplished. She was a cordial Protestant, and a pious Christian; and we cannot doubt, but her marriage with that Prince, who was appointed to perfect our liberties, was a special link in the chain of intermediate causes. She became a true English sovereign: a lover of the establishment, and an example of Christian charity. Strictly and habitually devout amid all the temptations of a court, she was prepared to meet death with almost more than resignation.

The character of her sister was much less impressive; her good qualities being better fitted for private life than a throne. It would be hard to charge her with inheriting the faults of her ancestors, from all the grosser instances of which she was clearly exempt. Yet there certainly appears in her attachments much of that weak subjection of mind (and a little, it may be feared, of that dissimulation too,) which had been so manifest in some former monarchs of her family. Yet even this weakness was over-ruled to great purposes. Had her attachment to the Duchess of Marlborough been more moderate, the Duke might not have possessed that supreme authority which enabled him to humble, by so unexampled a series of victories, that power which had been

* Mary and Anne.

the scourge of Protestantism, and the pest of Europe. And had her temper been less mutable, it might not have been so easy to accomplish a peace, when the reasonable ends of war had been so fully answered.

It would almost seem that the issue of this Princess was deemed by Providence too central a branch of the Stuart family to be entrusted with the newly-renovated constitution. A more distant connection had already been specially trained for this most important trust, though with little apparent probability of being called to exercise it, the Princess Anne having been no less than seventeen times pregnant. The death of the Duke of Gloucester, the last of her family, at length turned the eyes of the English public towards the Princess Sophia; and from henceforth she and her issue were recognised as presumptive heirs to the crown. Many of the events which occurred during the last years of Queen Anne's reign served not a little to enhance to all who were cordially attached to the English constitution the providential blessing of so suitable a succession.

A more remarkable event is scarcely to be found in the annals of the world. Nothing can be more essential to the interests of British liberty than that they who were concerned for its maintenance should be possessed of the promptest and most unexceptionable means of filling the vacant throne. No prince was fitted to their purpose who was not zealously attached to the Protestant religion; and

it was desirable that he should, at the same time, possess such a title, on ground of consanguinity, as that the principle of hereditary monarchy might be as little departed from as the exigencies of the case would admit. For the securing of both these radical objects, what an adequate provision was made in the Princess Sophia, and her illustrious offspring! The connection thus near was made interesting by every circumstance which could engage the hearts of English Protestants. The Princess Sophia was the only remaining child of that only remaining daughter of James the First, who, being married to one of the most zealous Protestant princes of the empire, became his partner in a series of personal and domestic distresses, in which his committing himself, in the cause of the Protestants of Bohemia, involved him and his family for near half a century. In her all the rights of her mother, as well as of her father, were vested; and while by the electoral dignity (of which her father had been deprived) being restored to her husband, the Duke of Hanover, she seemed, in part, compensated for the afflictions of her earlier life, — her personal character, in which distinguished wit and talents were united with wisdom and piety*, both these last probably taught her in the school of adversity, procured for her the admiration of all who knew her, as well

* See M. Chevreau's character of the Princess Sophia, quoted by Addison. Freeholder, No. 30. See also her two letters to Bishop Burnet, in his Life, annexed *to his own Times.*

as the veneration of those whose religious sentiments were congenial with her own.

Such was the mother of George the First! She lived, enjoying her bright faculties to a very advanced age, to see a throne prepared for her son far more glorious than that from which her father had been driven; or, what to her excellent mind was still more gratifying, she saw herself preserved, after the extinction of all the other branches of her paternal house, to furnish, in the most honourable instance possible, an invaluable stay and prop for that cause, on account of which her parents and their children seemed, for a time, to have "suffered the loss of all things."

Whether, then, we consider the succession of the house of Hanover as the means of finally establishing our civil and religious constitution, which then only can be regarded as having attained a perfect triumph over every kind of opposition, — or whether we view it as a most signal act of that retributive goodness which has promised "that every one who forsaketh house, or brethren, or lands, for his sake, shall receive manifold more even in this present life:" — I say, in whichsoever light we contemplate it, — especially if we connect it with the series of previous events in England, — and above all, compare it with the fate of the family from which the parent princess had sprung, — but which, after being chastised to no purpose, was rejected, to make room for those who had suffered in so much nobler a cause, and with so much better effect; — what can we say, but with the Psalmist,

"that promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor yet from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full mixed, and he poureth out of the same: but as for the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them."—"All the horns also of the wicked shall be cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted."

Another less momentous, yet highly interesting, instance of providential remuneration, connected with this great event, must not be passed over. It shall be given in the words of a living and a near observer.—"A wife," says Bishop Burnet, "was to be sought for Prince Charles (the Emperor's brother, whom the allies wished to establish on the Spanish throne,) among the Protestant courts, for there was not a suitable match in the Popish courts. He had seen the Princess of Anspach, and was much taken with her, so that great applications were made to persuade her to change her religion; but she could not be prevailed on to buy a crown at so dear a rate. And soon after, she was married to the Prince Electoral of Brunswick; which gave a glorious character of her to this nation. And her pious firmness is like to be rewarded, even in this life, by a much better crown than that which she rejected." * Surely this portion of our Queen Caroline's his-

* Burnet's own Times, 1707.

tory deserves to be had in perpetual remembrance!

The same prelate, speaking of King William, says, — "I considered him as a person raised up by God to resist the power of France, and the progress of tyranny and persecution. The thirty years from the year 1672, to his death, in which he acted so great a part, carry in them so many amazing steps of a glorious and distinguishing Providence, that, in the words of David, he may be called — *The man of God's right hand, whom he made strong for himself.*"

But if there were just ground for this remark respecting this particular period, and this individual personage, what shall we say of the entire chain of providences, which runs through our whole national history, from the landing of our Saxon ancestors to the present hour? May it not be confidently asked, — Is there at this day a nation upon earth whose circumstances appear so clearly to have been arranged, and bound together, by the hands of HIM, "who does whatsover he pleases both in heaven and earth?"

That the purposes of this great scheme have, as yet, been most inadequately answered, as far as our free agency is concerned, is a deep ground for our humiliation, but no argument against the reality of providential direction. The sacred history of the Jews, the only people who have been more distinguished than ourselves, presents to us not only their unparalleled obligations to the Almighty, but also a series of such abuses of

those mercies, as at length brought upon them a destruction as unexampled as their guilt. The great purposes of Heaven cannot be frustrated; but the instrument which embarrassed the process may, too surely, be excluded from any share in the beneficial results, and be, on the contrary, the distinguished victim of indignation. Thus Judea, in spite of all its apostasies, was made subservient to its original object. In spite of the barrenness of the parent tree, the mystic branch was made to spring from its roots; but this purpose being once served, the tree itself, nourished as it had been with the chief fatness of the earth, and with the richest dews of heaven, was "hewn down and cast into the fire."

Let England, let those especially of rank and influence, and, above all, let the personage whose high but most awful trust it may be to have the delegated oversight of this vineyard, which God has "fenced and planted with the choicest vine;" let ALL feel the weight of their responsibility, and avert those judgments which divine justice may deem commensurate to our abused advantages!

We have been the object of admiration to the whole civilised world! Such have been the blessings conferred upon us, and such have been the bright lights, from time to time, raised up among us, that it could not be otherwise. But what would the effect have been, if our unexampled constitution, correspondent to its native design, had called forth, not the unblushing, because unpunishable, baseness of party profligacy, but the

unfettered, disinterested, unanimous, exertion of commanding talent, of energetic application, and of invincible virtue! If a solicitude to digest the principles, to imbibe the spirit, and to exemplify the virtues of our illustrious worthies had been as assiduously excited by preceptors in their pupils, and by parents in their children, as a blind admiration of them, or a blinder vanity on account of them: — if those worthies had been as sedulously imitated as they have been loudly extolled; and above all, if our national church establishment had been as universally influential as it is intrinsically admirable in its impressive ordinances, its benignant spirit, and its liberal, yet unadulterated doctrines: — we mean not, if these effects had been produced to any improbable Utopian extent, but in that measure which was, in the nature of things, possible, and which the moral Governor of the universe had an equitable right to look for. If this had been realised, who can say what evils might have been prevented, what good might have been accomplished? How might Protestantism have spread through Europe, did our national morals keep pace with our profession! How happily might the sound philosophy of the English school, when thus illustrated, have precluded the impious principles and the blasphemous language of Voltaire and his licentious herd! And how would the widely-diffused radiance of our then unclouded constitution have poured even upon surrounding countries so bright a day, as to have made rational liberty an object of general, but

safe pursuit; and left no place for those works of darkness by which France has degraded herself, and outraged human nature!

Shall we, then, persevere in our inattention to the indications of Providence? Shall we persist in our neglect or abuse of the talents committed to us? Shall we be still unconscious that all our prosperity hangs suspended on the sole will of God, and that the moment of his ceasing to sustain us will be the moment of our destruction? And shall not this be felt particularly by those who, by being placed highest in the community, would, in such a ruin, be the most signal victims, so they may now do most toward averting the calamity? On the whole, what is the almost audible language of Heaven to prince and people, to nobles and commoners, to church and state, but that of the great Author of our religion in his awful message to the long since desolated churches of Asia? "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth; and I will kill thy children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give to every one of you according to your works."

CHAP. XL.

ON CHRISTIANITY AS A PRINCIPLE OF ACTION, ESPECIALLY AS IT RESPECTS SUPREME RULERS.

CHRISTIANITY is not an ingenious theory, a sublime but impracticable speculation, a fanciful invention to exercise the genius or sharpen the wit; but it is a system for common apprehension, for general use, and daily practice. It is critically adapted to the character of man, intelligible to his capacity, appropriated to his exigencies, and accommodated to his desires. It contains, indeed, abstruse mysteries to exercise his faith, to inure him to submission, to habituate him to dependence; but the sublimest of its doctrines involve deep practical consequences.

Revelation exhibits what neither the philosophy of the old, nor the natural religion of the modern, sceptic ever pretended to exhibit, a compact system of virtues and graces. Philosophy boasted only fair ideas, independent virtues, and disconnected duties. Christianity presents an unmutilated *whole*, in which a few simple but momentous premises induce a chain of consequences commensurate with the immortal nature of man. It is a scheme which not only displays every duty, but displays it in its just limitation and relative dependence; maintaining a lovely symmetry and fair proportion, which arise from the beautiful connec-

tion of one virtue with another, and of all virtues with that faith of which they are the fruits.

But the paramount excellence of Christianity is, that its effects are not limited, like the virtues of the pagans, to the circumscribed sphere of this world. *Their* thoughts and desires, though they occasionally appeared, from their sublimity, to have been fitted for a wider range, were in a great measure shut in by the dark and narrow bounds of the present scene. At most, they appear to have had but transient glimpses of evanescent light, which, however, while they lasted, made them often break out into short but spirited apostrophes of hope, and even triumph. The Stoics talked deeply and eloquently of self-denial, but never thought of extending, by its exercise, their happiness to perpetuity. Philosophy could never give to divine and eternal things sufficient distinctness or magnitude to induce a renunciation of present enjoyment, or to ensure to the conqueror, who should obtain a victory over this world, a crown of unfading glory. It never was explained, except in the page of Revelation, that God was himself an abundant recompense for every sacrifice which can be made for his sake. Still less was it ascertained, that, even in this life, God is to the good man his refuge and his strength, "a very present help in time of trouble." There is more rational consolation for both worlds, in these few words of the Almighty to Abraham, "Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward," than in

all the happy conjectures, and ingenious probabilities, of all the philosophers in the world.

The religion, therefore, which is in this little work meant to be inculcated is not the gloomy austerity of the ascetic; it is not the fierce intolerance of the bigot; it is not the mere assent to historical evidence, nor the mere formal observances of the nominal Christian. It is not the extravagance of the fanatic, nor the exterminating zeal of the persecutor: though all these faint shadows, or distorting caricatures, have been frequently exhibited as the genuine portraits of Christianity by those who either never saw her face, or never came near enough to delineate her fairly, or who delighted to misrepresent and disfigure her.

True religion is, on the contrary, the most sober, most efficient, most natural, and, therefore, most happy exercise of right reason. It is, indeed, rationally made predominant, by such an apprehension of what concerns us, in respect to our higher nature, as sets us above all undue attraction of earthly objects; and, in a great measure, frees the mind from its bondage to the body. It is that inward moral liberty which gives a man the mastery over himself, and enables him to pursue those ends which his heart and his conscience approve, without yielding to any of those warping influences, by which all, except genuine Christians, must be, more or less, led captive. In a word, it is the influential knowledge of HIM, whom to know is wisdom, — whom to fear is rectitude, — whom to love is happiness. A principle this, so

just in rational creatures to their infinite owner, benefactor, and end: so demanded by all that is perceivable in outward nature, so suggested by all that is right, and so required by all that is wrong in the human mind, that the common want of it, which almost every where presents itself, is only to be accounted for on the supposition of human nature being under some unnatural perversion, some deep delirium, or fatal intoxication; which, by filling the mind with sickly dreams, renders it insensible to those facts and verities, of which awakened nature would have the most awful and most impressive perception.

Thus, to awaken our reason, to make us sensible of our infatuation, to point us to our true interest, duty, and happiness, and to fit us for the pursuit, by making us love both the objects at which we are to aim, and the path in which we are to move, are the grand purposes of the Christian dispensation. If moral rectitude be an evil; if inward self-enjoyment be a grievance; if a right estimate of all things be folly; if a cheerful and happy use of every thing, according to its just and proper value, be misery; if a supreme, undeviating attachment to every thing that is true and honest, and just and pure, and lovely, and of good report, be weakness; — in short, if the truest relish for every thing substantially useful, every thing innocently pleasant in life, with the prospect, when life is ended, of felicity unspeakable and eternal be moping melancholy, then, and not otherwise, ought the religion of the New Testa-

ment to be treated with neglect, or viewed with suspicion, — as if it were hostile to human comfort, unsuitable to high station, or incompatible with any circumstances which right reason sanctions.

The Gospel is, in infinite mercy, brought within the aprehension of the poor and the ignorant; but its grandeur, like that of the God who gave it, is not to be lowered by condescension. In its humblest similitudes, the discerning mind will feel a majestic simplicity, identical with that of created nature; and, in its plainest lessons, an extent of meaning which spreads into infinitude. When we yield ourselves to its influences, its effects upon us are correspondent to its own nature. It lays the axe to the root of every kind of false greatness, but it leaves us in a more confirmed and far happier enjoyment of all which really gives lustre to the character, which truly heightens the spirit, which strengthens, ennobles, and amplifies the mind. It announces to us a spiritual sovereign, to whose unseen dominion the proudest potentates of the earth are in· unconscious, but most real subjection; but who, notwithstanding his infinite greatness, condescends to take up his residence in every human heart that truly yields to his influence; suppressing in it every unruly and unhappy passion; animating it with every holy and heavenly temper, every noble and generous virtue; fitting it for all the purposes of Providence, and fortifying it against calamities, by a "peace which passeth all understanding."

That this is a view of Christianity, founded in

irrefragable fact, and peculiarly demanding our regard, appears from the uniform language of its Divine Author, respecting himself and his mission, on all occasions where a summary annunciation was fitting. It is a spiritual kingdom, on the eve of actual establishment, of which he gives notice. To this ultimate idea, the other great purposes of his incarnation are to be referred. They over whom he means to reign are attainted rebels. He, therefore, so fulfils every demand of that law which they had violated, as to reverse the attainder, on grounds of eternal justice. They were also captives to a usurper, whose mysterious power he has so broken as to disable him from detaining any who are cordially willing to break their bonds. And having thus removed all obstacles, he offers privileges of infinite benefit; and demands no submission, no dereliction, no observance, but what in the very nature of things are indispensable to the recovery of moral health, moral liberty, and moral happiness; and what HE, by the gracious influences of his ever-present Spirit, will render, not only attainable, but delightful to the honest and humble heart.

The royal person, then, should early and constantly be habituated to consider herself as peculiarly under the government, and in a most especial manner needing the protection and guidance of this Almighty Sovereign; looking to his word for her best light, and to his spirit for her best strength; performing all that she undertakes in the manner most perfectly conformed to his

laws, and most clearly subservient to the interests of his spiritual kingdom; submitting all events to his wisdom, acknowledging no less his particular than his general Providence; and, above all, praying daily for his support, depending on his goodness for success, and submitting to his will in disappointment. In fact, to none, in so eminent a sense as to princes, does that sentiment of an inspired instructor belong: — "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."

She should practically understand, that religion, though it has its distinct and separate duties, yet it is not by any means a distinct and separate thing, so as to make up a duty of itself, disconnected with other duties; but that it is a grand and universally-governing principle, which is to be the fountain of her morality, and the living spring of all her actions; — that religion is not merely a thing to be retained in the mind, as a dormant mass of inoperative opinions, but which is to be brought by every individual into the detail of every day's deeds; which, in a Prince, is to influence his private behaviour, as well as his public conduct; which is to regulate his choice of ministers, and his adoption of measures; which is to govern his mind, in making war and making peace; which is to accompany him not only to the closet but to the council; which is to fill his mind, whether in the world or in retirement, with an abiding sense of the vast responsibility which he is under, and the awful account to which he

will one day be called, before that Being, who lodges the welfare of so many millions in his hands. In fine, to borrow the words of the pious Archbishop Secker, — "It ought to be explicitly taught, and much dwelt upon, that religion extends its authority to *every thing*; to the most worldly, the commonest, the lowest" (and surely still more to the highest earthly) "things; binding us to behave reasonably, decently, humbly, honourably, meekly, and kindly in them all; and that its interfering so far, instead of being a hardship, is a great blessing to us, because it interferes always for our good."

Parasites have treated some weak princes as if they were not of the same common nature with those whom they govern; and as if, of course, they were not amenable to the same laws. Christianity, however, does not hold out two sorts of religion, one for the court, and one for the country; one for the prince, and another for the people. Princes, as well as subjects, who, "by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality," shall reap "eternal life." As there is the same code of laws, so there is the same promise annexed to the observance of them: — "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." There are no exempt cases. The maxim is of universal application. There will be no pleading of privilege on that day, when the dead, SMALL and GREAT, shall stand before God; when they shall be "judged out of those

things which are written, in the book of God's remembrance according to their works."

So far from a dispensation of indulgences being granted to princes, they are bound even to more circumspection. They are set on a pinnacle, the peculiar objects of attention and imitation. Their trust is of larger extent and more momentous importance. Their influence involves the conduct of multitudes. Their example should be even more correct, because it will be pleaded as a precedent. Their exalted station, therefore, instead of furnishing excuses for omission, does but enlarge the obligation of performance. They may avail themselves of the same helps to virtue, the same means for duty; and they have the same, may we not rather say, they have even a stronger assurance of Divine aid, since that aid is promised to be proportioned to the exigence; and the exigencies of princes are obviously greater than those of any other class of men.

Power and splendour are not to be considered as substitutes for virtue, but as instruments for its promotion, and means for its embellishment. The power and splendour of sovereigns are confirmed to them by the laws of the state, for the wisest and most beneficial purposes. But these illustrious appendages are evidently not meant for their personal gratification, but to give impressiveness and dignity to their station; to be suitable and honourable means of supporting an authority, which Providence has made indispensable to the peace and happiness of society; and on the adequate energy

of which, the security and comfort of all subordinate ranks, in their due gradations, so materially depend.

Can we hesitate to conclude, that at the last great audit, princes will be called to account, not only for all the wrong which they have done, but for all the right which they have neglected to do? Not only for all the evil they have perpetrated, but for all that they, wilfully, have permitted? For all the corruptions which they have sanctioned, and all the good which they have discouraged? It will be demanded, whether they have employed royal opulence in setting an example of wise and generous beneficence, or of contagious levity and voluptuousness? Whether they have used their influence in promoting objects clearly for the public good, or in accomplishing the selfish purposes of mercenary favourites? And whether, on the whole, their public and private conduct tended more to diffuse religious principle, and sanction Christian virtue, or to lend support to fashionable profligacy, and to undermine national morality?

At the same time, it is to be remembered that they will be judged by that *omniscient* Being, who sees the secret bent and hidden inclinations of the heart; and who knows that the best prince cannot accomplish all the good he wishes, nor prevent all the evil he disapproves: — by that *merciful* Being, who will recompense pure desires and upright intentions, even where providential obstacles prevented their being carried into execution: —

by that *compassionate* Being who sees their difficulties, observes their trials, weighs their temptations, commiserates their dangers, and takes most exact cognisance of circumstances, of which no human judge can form an adequate idea. — Assured, as we are, that this gracious method of reckoning will be extended to all, may we not be confident that it will be peculiarly applied where the case most expressly stands in need of it? And may we not rest persuaded, that if there is a spectacle which our Almighty Ruler beholds with peculiar complacency on earth, and will recompense with a crown of distinguished brightness in heaven, it is a SOVEREIGN DOING JUSTLY, LOVING MERCY, AND WALKING HUMBLY WITH GOD.

But is religion to be pursued by princes only as a guide of conduct, a law by which they are to live and act; as a principle, which, if cultivated, will qualify them for eternal felicity? These are invaluable benefits, but they do not *wholly* express all that princes in particular need from religion. *They*, in an eminent degree, require consolation and support for this life, as well as a title to happiness in the life to come. *They*, above all human beings, need some powerful resource to bear them up against the agitations, and the pressures, to which their high station inevitably exposes them.

To whom on this earth are troubles and heart-aches so sure to be multiplied as to princes, especially to those of superior understanding and sensibility? Who, of any other rank, are exposed

to such embarrassing trials, such difficult dilemmas? We speak not merely of those unfortunate monarchs who have undergone striking vicissitudes, or who have been visited with extraordinary calamities; but of such also whom the world would rather agree to call prosperous and happy. — Yet let him who doubts this general truth read the accounts given by all our historians of the last years of King William, and the last months of Queen Anne, and then let him pronounce what could be more trying, than those disappointments and disgusts which sunk into the very soul of the one, or those cares and agitations which finally destroyed the peace of the other?

If there be then any secret in the nature of things, any clearly infallible remedy by which such distresses may be assuaged, by which self-command, self-possession, and even self-enjoyment may be secured in the midst of the greatest trials to which mortality is liable, — would not this be an object to which the view of princes, even above all the rest of mankind, should be directed; and in comparison of which they might justly hold cheap all the honours of their birth, and all the prerogatives of their rank?

Christian piety, when real in itself, and when thoroughly established in the heart, and in the habits, *is* this secret. — When the mind is not only conscientiously but affectionately religious; — when it not only fears God, as the Almighty Sovereign, but loves and confides in him, as the all-gracious Father; not merely inferred to be

such, from the beauty and benignity apparent in the works of nature, but rationally understood to be such from the discoveries of Divine grace in the word of God; — and let us add, no less rationally felt to be such, from the transforming influence of that word upon the heart; then, acts of devotion are no longer a penance, but a resource, and a refreshment; in so much, that the voluptuary would as soon relinquish those gratifications for which he lives, as the devout Christian would give up his daily intercourse with his Maker. — But it is not in stated acts merely that such devotion lives, — it is an habitual sentiment which diffuses itself through the whole of life, purifying, exalting, and tranquillising every part of it, smoothing the most rugged paths, — making the yoke of duty easy, and the burden of care light. It is a perennial spring in the very centre of the heart, to which the wearied spirit betakes itself for refreshment and repose.

In this language there is no enthusiasm. It is, in spite of the cold raillery of the sceptic, the language of truth and soberness. The Scriptures ascribe to Christian piety this very efficacy; and every age and nation furnish countless instances of its power to raise the human mind to a holy heroism superior to every trial. "Were there not," says the sober and dispassionate Tillotson, "something *real* in the principles of religion, it is impossible that they should have so remarkable and so regular an effect to support the mind in every condition, upon so great a number of per-

sons, of different degrees of understanding, of all ranks and conditions, young and old, learned and unlearned, in so many distant places, and in all ages of the world, the records whereof are come down to us. I say, so real, and so frequent, and so regular an effect as this, cannot, with any colour of reason, be ascribed either to blind chance or mere imagination, but must have a real, and regular, and uniform cause, proportionable to so great and general an effect." *

We are persuaded that if the subject of this chapter be considered with an attention equal to its importance, every other virtue will spring up, as it were spontaneously, in the mind, and a high degree of excellence, both public and private, be instinctively pursued. In such a case, how happy would be the distinguished individual, and how inconceivably benefited and blessed would be the community!

Pious sovereigns are, at all times, the richest boon which Heaven can bestow on a country. The present period makes us more than ever sensible of their importance. A period in which law has lost its force, rank its distinction, and order its existence; in which ancient institutions are dissolving, and new powers of undescribed character and unheard-of pretensions, are involving Europe in contests and convulsions, of which no human foresight can anticipate the end. In what manner *we* may be affected by this unprecedented state of things, what perils *we* may have

* Sermon XL.

to face, what difficulties to struggle with, or what means of final extrication may be afforded us, it is not in man to determine. But certain it is, that, even in the most threatening circumstances, the obvious, unaffected, consistent piety of the sovereign, will do more to animate and unite a British public, than the eloquence of a Demosthenes, or the songs of a Tyrtæus; and it will be as sure a pledge of eventual success, as either the best disciplined armies or the most powerful navies. Who can say how much we are indebted for our safety hitherto to the blessing of a king and queen, who have distinguished themselves above all the sovereigns of their day by strictness of moral conduct and by reverence for religion? May their successors, to the latest posterity, improve upon instead of swerving from their illustrious example!

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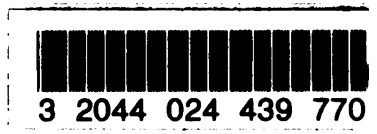
LONDON:
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.



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